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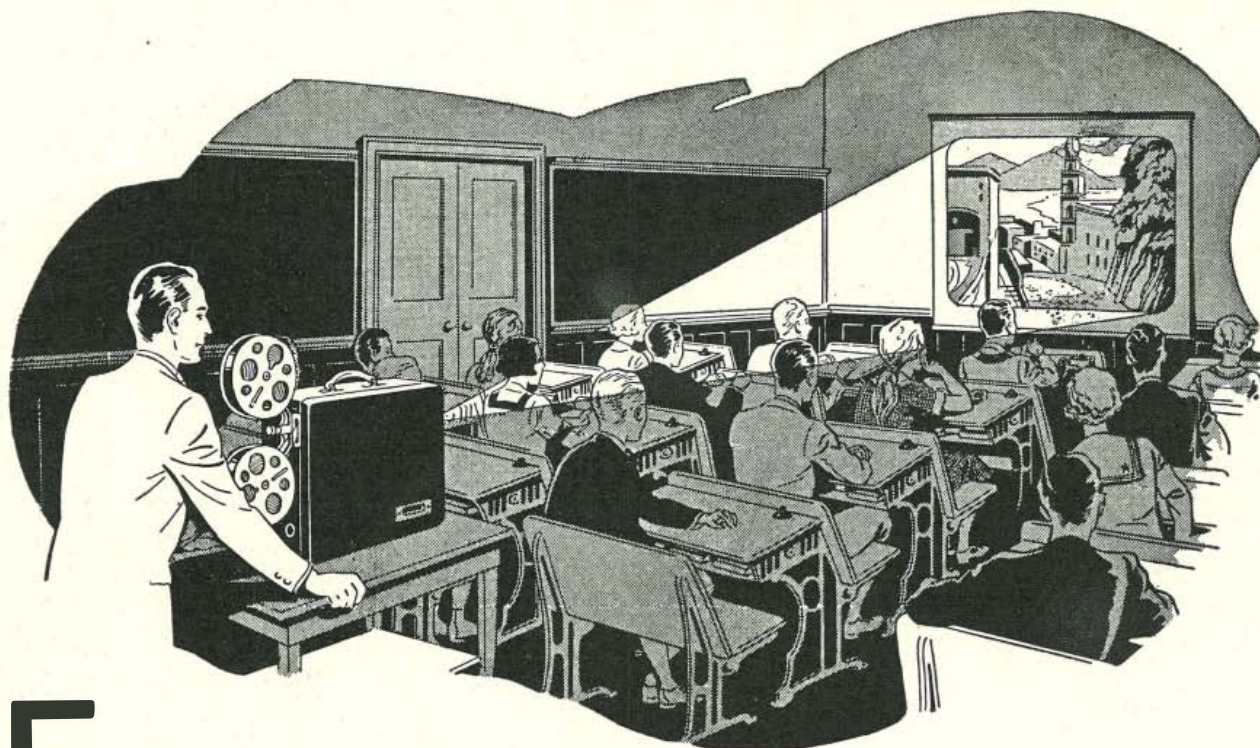
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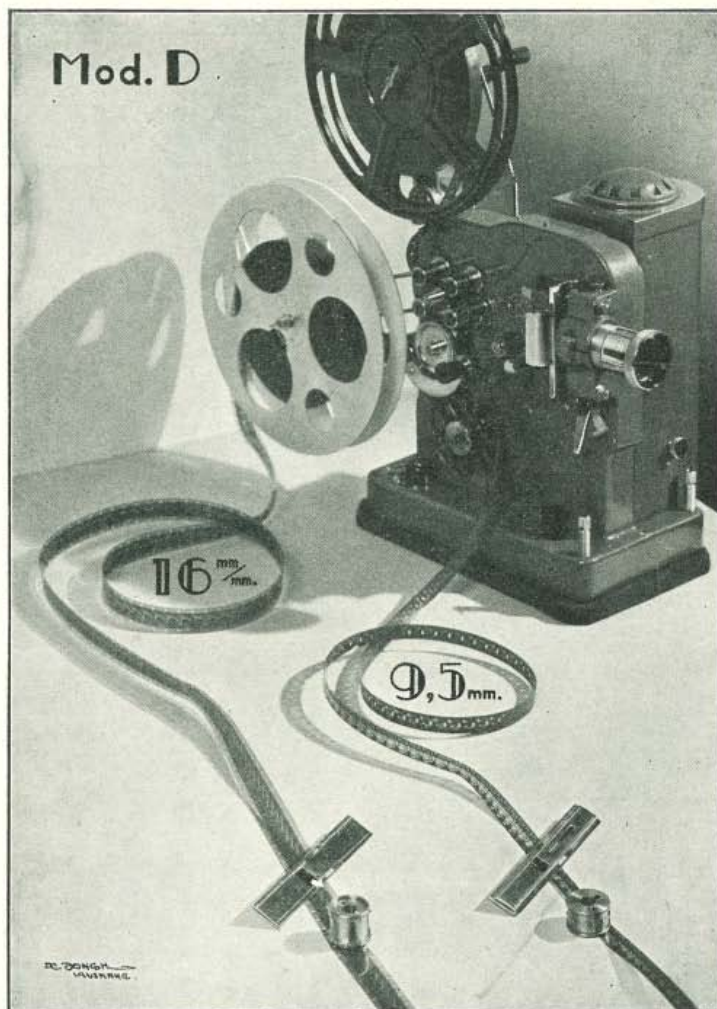
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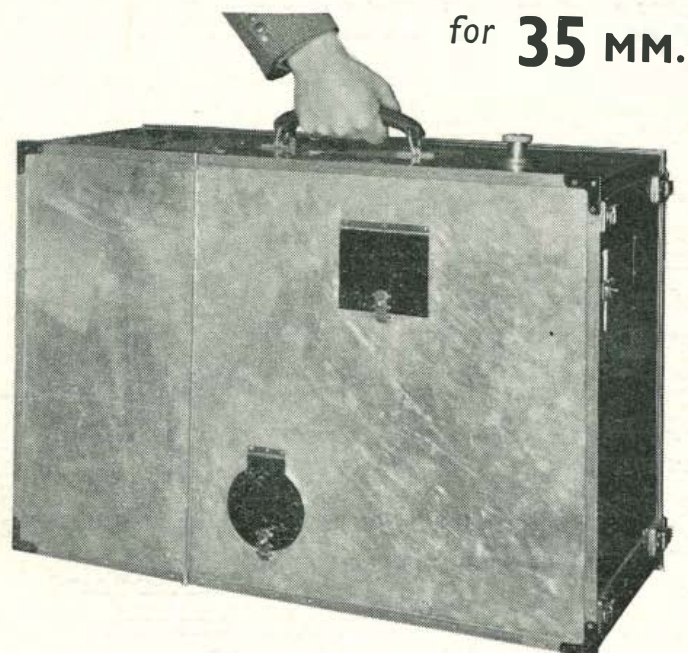
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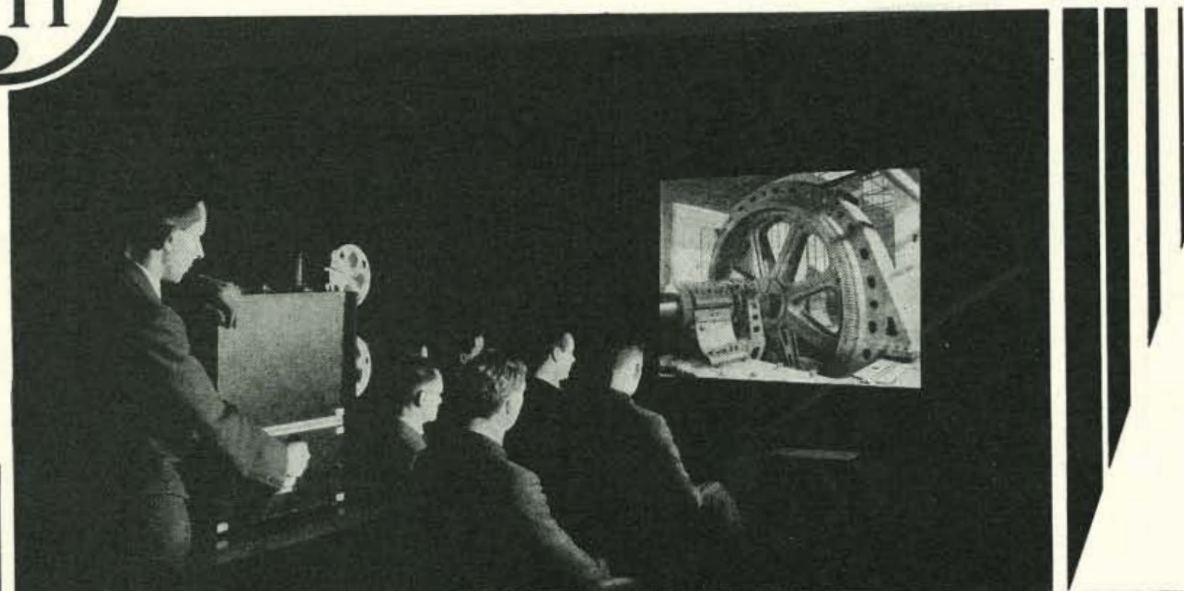
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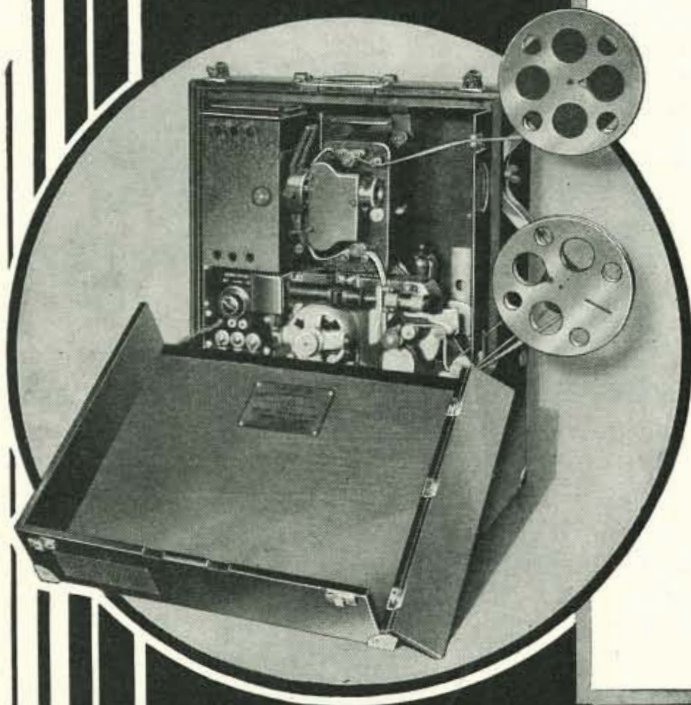


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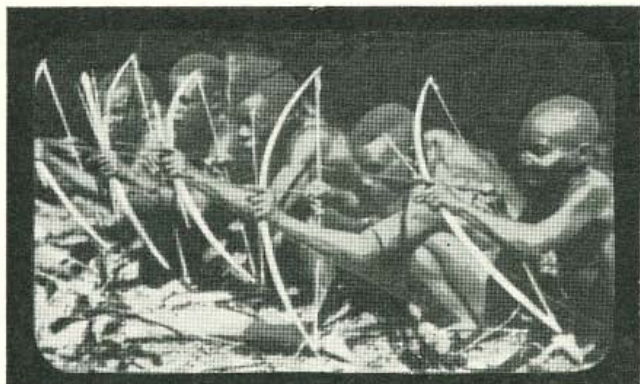
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QUESTIONNAIRES

ACCORDING to the latest report of the Kinematograph Renters' Society there are to-day in this country 1,200 picture houses, whose takings are less than £48 a week, and another 1,000 whose takings are less than £100 a week. With so many empty cinemas it is not surprising to find that more attention is being given by the film trade to-day than ever before to trying to find out the tastes of the film-going public—both the majority which is out for pure entertainment as well as those minorities which take a specialised interest in some particular kind of film—educational, scientific or propagandist. Now the task of exploring the tastes of the ordinary filmgoer is not easy, as is shown by the interesting attempt which Mr. Sidney L. Bernstein is making, in the circulation to the patrons of his theatres

of a questionnaire which reads as follows :

1. Who are your favourite film stars ?
2. Which film star do you dislike most ?
3. Which film actors or actresses you have seen in small parts would you like to see in star roles ?
4. What kind of film do you prefer ?
5. How long do you like a programme to last ?
6. Do you like two big pictures in one programme or only one big picture and several short ones ?
7. Do you like an organ solo ?
8. Which is your favourite film director ?
9. Which paper has the best film news and criticism ?
10. How often do you go to the pictures ?
11. What part of the cinema do you usually sit in ?
12. Have you any other suggestions for the improvement of cinema entertainment generally ?

This is a shrewd list of questions, and if Mr. Bernstein can secure sufficient answers to them he will have some useful

material to go upon in judging taste. Naturally, however, any list of this sort invites suggestion of omissions. It is not clear, for instance, whether question 4 would cover criticism of film subjects and their treatment. And question 9, again, might be more interesting if it was wider in scope and asked, "To what source do you look for information about films and advice as to what is best worth seeing?"

A questionnaire with another purpose and drafted upon totally different but equally interesting lines is that which G.B. Instructional Films have been giving out to teachers and others interested in their new programme of educational films. The seven films which are now being demonstrated (under the auspices of the Film Institute) in various parts of the country form the first group of classroom films which have been issued in Britain. The questionnaire which relates to them asks teachers to answer the following:

1. Is the film of value in teaching the particular subject with which it deals?
2. Is there over-emphasis on particular points, or vice-versa?
3. Does the film fit into any reasonable syllabus?
4. For what age would it be most useful?
5. Is it suitable for classroom or background teaching?
6. Is the construction coherently planned?
7. Does the film supplement the work of the teacher or standard text books on the subjects?
8. Is sufficient use made of diagrams or maps?

Questions have also been asked concerning the apparatus and also the specimen textbooks which are to be used with the films. We hope a sufficiently large number of replies will be received from educators in all parts so that a basis for further constructive experiment can be established.

The Cinema in the School

The establishment of the British Film Institute has given a particular fillip to the movement for encouraging the use of the film in schools, both for teaching purposes and for background in education. One of the first tasks of the Film Institute was the establishment of its Advisory Council and the setting up of an Education Panel of this Council comprising many of the most distinguished educational experts

in the country. This has been followed by an increase of activity in the commercial production of educational films for school purposes.

But perhaps the most significant feature of the movement is the interest which has been taken in it by the Board of Education, as represented in the person of its Parliamentary Under-Secretary, Mr. H. Ramsbotham, M.P., who gave an introductory address at the recent demonstration of the new G.B. Instructional films in London. It seems clear that the Board of Education is now prepared to give the lead to local educational authorities throughout the country to play a more active part in exploring the educational possibilities of the film. There are signs, too, that teachers both individually and through their professional associations (we may instance the recent resolution passed by the Association of Head Teachers) are pressing for more experiment with the new medium; and we are pleased to notice that several new schools which have recently been opened, such as the Royal Masonic School for Girls, are equipped with facilities for showing films to their pupils.

New Section of SIGHT AND SOUND

Accordingly the time has come for SIGHT AND SOUND to devote a definite section of its space to recording developments in school cinematography. We publish in this issue a stimulating survey of the possibilities of establishing film societies in schools; and we have arranged to reserve, commencing with our next issue in September, eight pages in each issue to "The Cinema in the School." This section will be edited by an experienced teacher who has also played a considerable part in building up the movement for better films for which SIGHT AND SOUND has always stood. We hope that the schools of the country and education authorities generally will come to look upon this section of SIGHT AND SOUND as the principal source of authoritative information concerning the progress of the teaching film both sound and silent in all its aspects.



Flaherty's *MAN OF ARAN*, which will be released on July 30th. Review on page 70 (Gaumont-British)

NOTES OF THE QUARTER

Exhibitions of Instructional Films

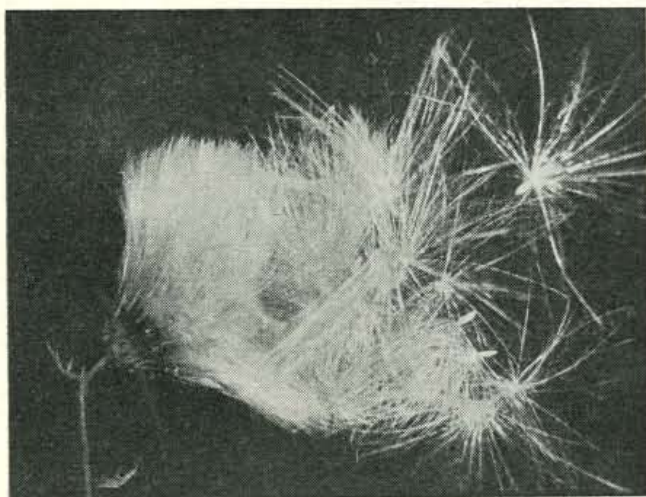
During the quarter a number of important exhibitions of documentary and instructional films have taken place. Arranged in conjunction with the International Institute of Educational cinematography the Film Institute's inaugural programme of international instructional films (including documentaries from England, France, Germany, Italy, Czechoslovakia and the United States) was held on May 9th at the Polytechnic Theatre, Regent Street.

On May 10th G.B. Instructional arranged a special programme of their new educational and documentary films at Film House for the distinguished visitors who were in London for the inauguration of the British Film Institute. On this occasion Paul Rotha's *Rising Tide* was shown for the first time, with three classroom films:—*The Thistle*, *Breathing* and *The Wheatfields of East Anglia*.

On the 28th, by the courtesy of the High Commissioner for the Union of South Africa, a selection of the instructional films which have been taken out

to Capetown and Johannesburg by Mr. G. T. Hankin, of the Board of Education, for the South African Educational Conference, was shown to an audience of educational authorities at South Africa House, London, with the addition of the South African film of the Kruger National Park. The films being shown in South Africa will be divided into four sections: standard size sound films for "background" instruction; sub-standard sound films; sub-standard silent films, and films designed to educate the educators. In the last section Mr. Stuart Legg's well known film of the Chesterfield experiment, *The New Generation*, was one of the films selected by the New Education Fellowship. Sections one and three were selected by the British Film Institute, who advised Mr. Hankin in the choice of films and apparatus for the Conference; and section two was supplied by G. B. Instructional; the Gaumont British Corporation also sent out a comprehensive exhibit of apparatus.

The G.P.O. Film Unit held an exhibition of



THE THISTLE, by Percy Smith : one of the G.B. Instructional films now being shown to teachers throughout the country

Post Office films to members of the Government and to teachers at the Phoenix Theatre on June 19th. The films shown included *Under the City*, *The 6.30 Collection* and *Cable Ship*, produced by the Unit, and *The River Postman* (Pathé newsreel).

Under the auspices of the British Film Institute the first series of G.B. Instructional Films, produced for use in schools, was presented to a large audience of educationists at the Academy Theatre, London, on June 21st. The films have been produced according to a plan initiated in co-operation with the Film Institute, and with the advice and approval of the authorities in each subject. We refer elsewhere at greater length to this important exhibition.

The place of films in school

The programme was introduced by the Parliamentary Secretary to the Board of Education, Mr. H. Ramsbotham, who congratulated Messrs. G. B. Instructional on their courageous attack on the problem of controlling the cinematograph so as to make it serve specific educational purposes. At the same time he hoped that the audience would be critical, for comments and ideas were needed in order progressively to improve the usefulness of this remarkable educational medium. He pointed out that the use of films could not be accepted without reservations. "It has a certain place, and I want it to fill that place to capacity, but it should not be allowed to sprawl over the school uncontrolled and without the guidance of teachers.

"But I think you can be sure of this," continued Mr. Ramsbotham, "if there is room for the stationary picture on the school wall there is room for the moving picture on the school screen, and none of us must be nervous of it because it is new to the schools. I expect that in the old days, when blackboards and chalk were first invented, a good many educationists denounced them as new fangled and undesirable methods of teaching. My advice is, examine and assess the possibilities of the cinematograph with detachment and without prejudice,

and when you think you know what contribution it can make to education, then work hard to ensure that it makes that contribution and do not be content with anything less valuable."

A questionnaire was distributed asking for criticism and suggestions as a guide to future productions. The programme was repeated at Bristol, Brighton and Cardiff on June 26th, 28th and 29th, and will be shown at a number of other important centres throughout the country. It is hoped that by this means a useful guide to the needs of teachers will be obtained.

Training for Cinematography

The second year of the two years' course of training for the moving picture industry arranged by the London Polytechnic at the request of the British Kinematograph Society has now come to an end and the students are ready to enter the trade and prove the value of their training.

The final examination was held during the first week of July under Dr. Spencer, of Colour Photographs, Ltd., and Mr. Eveleigh and Mr. Rudkin, of National Screen Services, Ltd. Dr. Spencer provided the technical photographic questions and Mr. Eveleigh and Mr. Rudkin those dealing with the photographic side of cinematography. Captain A. G. D. West, with Captain Date, Mr. Short, Mr. Young and Mr. Bolton, of the Polytechnic, examined in the electrical side of sound recording and in electro-technology.

A successful exhibition of films made by the senior students was presented in the Portland Hall on May 15th. The projection, sound effects (from gramophone discs) and the handling of the curtains, lighting, etc., was entirely in the hands of the students. The films shown included: 10 a.m. *Down* by P. G. Baylis, *London Market* by P. Tempero, *Fair Ground* by L. W. J. Harris, *Cinema* by G. Higgs, *Cameos of London* by G. J. Craig, *Dover* by G. R. Tingley, *A Glimpse of the Cornish Coast* by R. Voller, and *In Salzkammergut* by D. Cartwright. (Stills on pages 54 and 90).

Venice International Exhibition of Cinematography

At the second International Exhibition of Cinematographic Art to be held under the auspices of the Venice Biennial Art Exhibition in August, the prizes will be awarded as follows: one cup to the best Italian film and one to the best foreign film; the City of Venice is offering a cup to the best director; the gold medal of the Fascist Theatrical Association will go to the best actor; the Fascist Syndicate of Professional Men and Artists offers a gold medal to the writer of the best scenario; the Corporation of Entertainments a prize to the best actress; the Ministry of National Education a gold medal for the best documentary; the Italian Federation of Industry one for animated cartoons; and the L.U.C.E. a cup for the best photography.

Among the films to be shown at the exhibition Czecho Slovakia is sending a documentary from Prague, *The Storm Over the Mountains*. France is sending *La Porteuse de Pain* (Albatross) and a Rene Clair film; the Reich Department for Propaganda in Germany has drawn up a programme including avant-garde and documentary films; the Foreign Culture Propaganda Department in Moscow is sending two or three films; America is sending its outstanding productions, of which one will be *Little Women*; *Blossom Time* and *Contact* are included in England's large consignment; and India, Japan, Mexico and Poland will also be represented.

HOW THE PUBLIC GETS ITS FILMS

PROFIT OR PRESTIGE?

By Kenneth A. Nyman

GIVING the film-going public what it likes is the ever-present problem of the exhibitor¹. Patrons are ever clamouring that he does not give them what they like and that they do not like what he offers. Exhibitors, generally, realise that while they are in the business as entertainment caterers for profit, a constant study of the vagaries of public taste is essential for maintaining his profits; in his peculiar position of public purveyor he can, however, influence that taste and so increase the prestige of the business as well.

Public taste being such a variable factor, the exhibitor often finds these twin ideals—profit and prestige—absolutely conflicting². This most interesting subject—films and public reaction—is well worth pursuing for the extraordinary data and baffling conclusions which present themselves.

To appreciate the public reaction to films it is essential for the layman to know in broad outline the various processes leading up to the commercial exploitation of films so that he may understand the difficulties encountered by independent³ film bookers. Perhaps this may lead him to temper justice with mercy in his critical onslaughts on the trade. Even the keenest film-fan has usually not the least notion of the processes preceding public exhibition (Censorship, local authorities' regulations, Film Acts are only some of the influences he has to consider). A large section of the public assumes that any film is available at a fixed price at any cinema whose owner decides to book it—and that if a "good" film be missed it is due solely to the indolence or ignorance of the exhibitor. Would it were as simple as this!

The exploitation of films is a mad, chaotic muddle of business methods that can only be understood by one with a Marxian (four brothers!) mind. It is not paralleled by any other commercial undertakings, because the goods offered here to the exhibitor by the renter have no fixed price. Take a particular brand of, say, chewing gum; a retailer may buy it for re-sale to the public at (usually) a fixed market price in any shop in the same town as his competitor. The individual retailer has no "exclusive rights" for his area "barring" the prior or contemporaneous sale of such goods by a competitor. But this in fact is what happens with films.

The renter⁴ in hiring a film to an exhibitor is paid not only for the right to exhibit in that theatre, but in addition, to exclude or 'bar' the competitor from showing that film for a fixed period. The price demanded for a film thus depends not only on:—

- (a) estimated 'drawing power' at the box office
- (b) number of competitors desiring the film

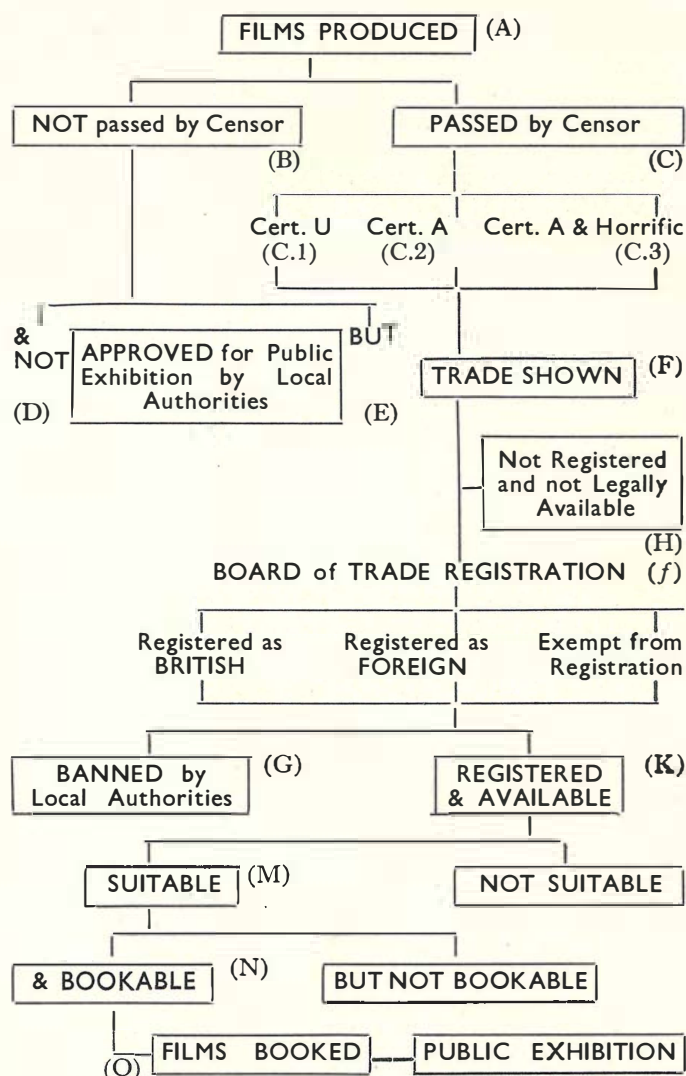
A PROBLEM FOR EXHIBITORS

(c) number of other suitable films available on that date,
but also on

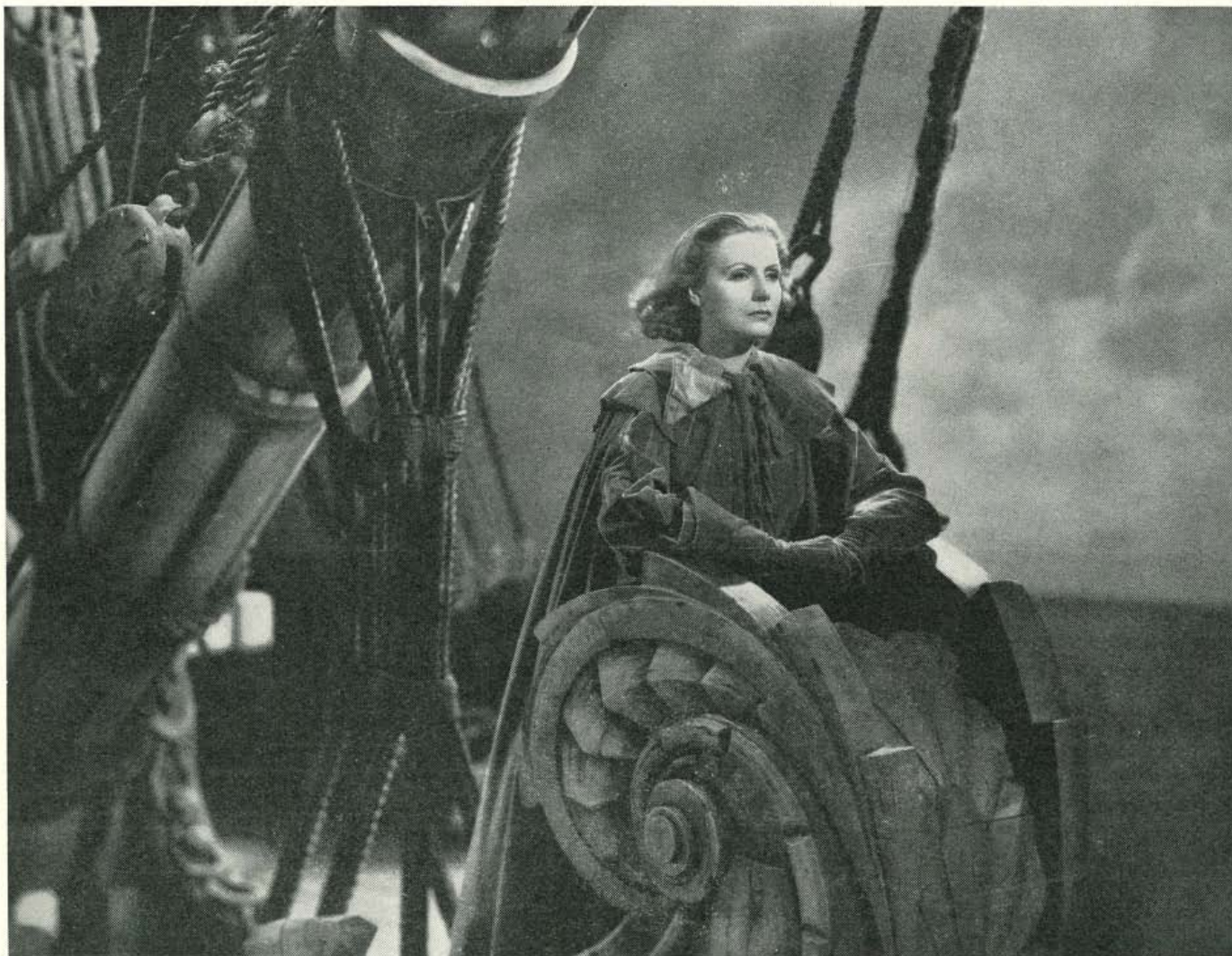
(d) the right to priority, i.e., "barring" of competitors or "exclusivity."

It is in this "exclusivity" that the film business differs basically from all other commercial transactions. Let us therefore briefly sketch the process of film-buying for our theatre from the time that the renter announces he has a film to hire out to exhibitors (stage A on our chart). First, the film censors must approve it for public exhibition: they may either:—

- 1. Ban it (B).
- or 2. Pass it for "universal exhibition" (U Certificate). (C.1.)



BUYING A FILM is by no means such a simple process for the exhibitor as his public may consider. This chart shows what happens to a production before it is available for booking



QUEEN CHRISTINA : Greta Garbo in Mamoulian's film of the Swedish queen, to be released in September (M.G.M.)

- or 3. Pass it for "public exhibition" (A Certificate) which means that children may not see the film unless accompanied by a responsible adult. (C.2.)
- or 4. Class it as "horrific" (e.g. *Frankenstein*, *King Kong*) with Certificate "A" (C.3.)

A film, however, even if banned by the Censor (B) may still be exhibited in a given area if the local authorities decide to over-ride the censor's objection (E). Hence the occasional sensational poster "Banned by Censors—Passed by So-and-So County Council."

Fortunately the tendency is more and more to abide by the Censor's ruling and this class of film (E) is becoming much smaller and will probably disappear; also, in England, it is a growing practice to submit the scenario to the Censor for possible amendments before it goes into production so that Class D is very small.

The Films Act requires that the film shall go through two processes.

1. It shall be *trade shown* (F) i.e., cinema bookers and viewers shall have an opportunity of seeing the film at either a private performance or the first of a series of public performances.

(The fact that a film has been passed by the Censor and trade shown still does not prevent a local authority from banning it if it think fit (G), but for reasons stated above (in connection with Class (E) and because in general the Censor's ruling is fair, sensible and acceptable), this class (G) is small.

Now we have the large majority of films, which at this, or at an earlier stage have to conform to the other part of the Quota Act requirement, viz.,

2. It shall be registered by the Board of Trade (f) which issues a certificate stating that the film is (a) of stated footage and (b) ranks as either a British or a Foreign Film or (c) is exempt (as defined by the Act).

Of this class (F) nearly all become registered and available (K). A few do not (H) but the importance of these few is in inverse proportion to their number:—these are "unusual" and "foreign" films whose market is comparatively limited. Renters are not anxious to be involved in the heavy initial costs of registration, printing and distribution of copies and the cost of acquisition of British quota films to conform with the Act, because the market is limited to those towns (Liverpool, Leeds, London) where the population is big enough to support a "specialist" cinema and to such cultural centres

as Oxford and Cambridge. This would appear to be one of the failings of the Quota Act from the more intelligent filmgoer's point of view. The very films in which he is most interested, because they are uncommercial from the point of view of the renter, do not become registered and the exhibitor would be committing a legal offence if he dare exhibit them (H). Thus only a very few of those "unusual" films theoretically available are ever shown—these being the few that appear to have sufficient chances of commercial success for the renters to get a monetary return for their exploitation.

An admirable article by Eric Hakim, published in the last issue of SIGHT AND SOUND, elaborates this point and effectively proves what a good case there is for the operations of the Quota Act to be modified (if only for a restricted period) in respect of these "unusual" films (mostly French and pre-Nazi German and some Japanese and Russian). After all, this is the very type of film of which we want to encourage increased production and exhibition in order to give the public that "something different" which they insistently demand and at the same time to raise the standard of artistic quality of film product in general. (The fact that "artistic quality" may mean different things to different people does not alter the point of this important plea).

To return to the main product, i.e., films registered and available (K) the exhibitor has now to decide which are suitable for his particular audience. He has many things to ponder. Has it star value? If it has none, but is a very good film, dare he take the risk on its artistic merit? Is the theme suitable for showing at a family house? or is it a "West End" picture?

Is the dialogue likely to offend by its length (or strength)? Has it comedy? If so, is it too subtle, or too slapstick, or does it smack of the Rabelaisian? Is the accent too "Broadway" or does the devastatingly "refained" Oxford accent obtrude? Is it well acted? And if it isn't, will the dynamic treatment of the story compensate his audience for this fault? Is the story developed so melodramatically that his audiences will be reduced to ribald and vocal interjection at the tensest moment? Dare he show a film depicting the drab life of unemployed wharf labourers at his dockside cinema, or must he continue to play safe by showing those films depicting millionaires' homes with Cecil de Millian bathrooms and beautiful and bejewelled women?

Is the audience jingoistic enough to flock to see a bad British film in preference to a good American



From ABEL WITH THE MOUTH-ORGAN: A Ufa film of the Nazi era; "Die Koralle," Berlin, describes this picture as "German, young and unforgettable." Director: Erich Waschneck. Players: Carl Ludwig Schreiber and Karin Hardt.



THE PUBLIC: A shot in *FAIR GROUND*, by L. W. J. Harris (London Polytechnic exhibition of students' films)

one? Or so cosmopolitan and biassed that no British film, however good, attracts their money to the pay box? Is there any element of propaganda at variance with the political views, or class-consciousness of his patrons? Or are there scenes of religious fervour? (for these, unfortunately, invariably provoke laughter). Does an animal film rouse their ire? Are the love passages too long or too passionate? (they will probably excite derision). All these questions touch on the large and extremely interesting question of film audiences and their reactions, and indicate a field of research which might be usefully explored by psychologists.

These are but a few of the considerations which the exhibitor has in view in making his list of suitable films (M). He now has to *book* these films and there is more trouble ahead. As several competitors in his area may have similar views as to the suitability of certain films he may find that any or all of several things have happened:

- (a) the "circuits"⁶ may have stepped in and booked the films.
- or (b) competing cinemas offer better terms
- or (c) the price⁷ is too prohibitive

or (d) the renter insists that the exhibitor books other films (which the exhibitor does not consider suitable) in order to obtain those he wants to book.

An independent exhibitor finds that perhaps only half his programme needs are available among the suitable films which he can book at fair rentals (N).

How does he complete his programmes? By having to take films which are not ideally suited to his audience and by booking suitable films at uneconomic prices. But this is complicated by Quota requirements which demand that he takes (this year) roughly one British film in eight (rising by 1938 to 1 in 5).

The better British films are mainly controlled by two British producing companies who themselves own large numbers of theatres. If, as nearly always happens, either (or both) the circuits has a theatre in his area, half (or all) the better British films are not available for the exhibitor, who has then to fall back on the British films handled by non-British renters. These renters have, naturally, no urge to foster British production and often acquire poor crude productions known to the trade as "Quota Quickies" as cheaply as possible, to conform with the law. (It is interesting to note that most renters are tending to improve their Quota product, if only for commercial reasons. One American company, at least, has successfully proved the wisdom of this policy).

Assume, however, that the exhibitor has secured his main feature films (P). He now has to match and balance each complete programme. If he shows one big (feature) film and fills up with "shorts" he must exercise great care in their selection. He is restricted in his choice to two main classes of shorts—(a) travel and interest, and (b) comedy (in addition to news reels). The advent of talkies has seen a fall in the quality of comedy shorts (why have British producers not seriously attempted these?), while the travel and interest films do not always travel very far or prove interesting. It is obvious that if his first feature is of high quality his "make-up" of shorts must be most carefully chosen. It is noteworthy how many protests there are about bad shorts.

If the exhibitor runs a two-feature programme the



THE PUBLIC: At present the length of the queue depends chiefly on the "star value" of the film.



THE SCARLET EMPRESS, with Marlene Dietrich as Catherine of Russia, is to be released in September. The film is directed by Von Sternberg and is chiefly remarkable for its grotesque settings. (Paramount)

second feature should contrast with the first. It must not clash by having, e.g., a similar theme or the same star; they may not both be costume films; but such are the vagaries of renters' competition and the clashing of release dates that the following are good examples (quoted from Mr. S. Bernstein's recent communications to the trade press) of the complications which the renters add to an exhibitor's difficulties in matching his programmes wisely.

- (a) Three costume dramas—written around Royalty, two on Queen Catherine of Russia—one on Queen Christine of Sweden—are being released on three consecutive weeks. (Will the public be "fed-up" with such a royal succession?).
- (b) Only two films have ever been made with dog racing as the central theme. They are both released on the same date!
- (c) On a certain release date two more films are released with the same star.

If you have read so far you will begin to realise that the conscientious film booker's job is not all beer and skittles.

If occasionally you feel you've been let down don't be too harsh with destructive criticism. Have

your grouse by all means, but rather give your local cinema proprietor a reasonable statement of your likes and dislikes. It will help him to help the producer to please you.

FOOTNOTES

1. *Exhibitor*. A person (or company) owning a cinema theatre.

2. Cf. the book publisher who may have to choose between the prestige of publishing good literature and the profits on Ethel M. Dell.

3. *Independent*, i.e., not allied with companies owning large numbers of cinemas. Usually in control of one or very few theatres. Possessing none of the circuits' film-buying powers.

4. *Renter*. A company which acquires films from the actual producers and hires them out to exhibitors.

5. The Japanese production of feature films last year was not far short of the American total!

6. *Circuits*. Large combines or groups of theatres under single control which, owing to their numbers and ubiquity in the United Kingdom, command priority over, and better booking terms than, 'Independents.'

7. The usual method of payment is by an agreed percentage of box-office receipts. Obviously if too high a percentage is paid for a film that proves unattractive, the exhibitor often finds that after paying film hire he may be left with insufficient to cover his standing charges and other expenses. Thus an exhibitor is constantly gambling on the soundness of his judgment as to a film's drawing power.

AN OPEN LETTER

from Moholy Nagy

TO THE FILM INDUSTRY AND TO ALL WHO ARE INTERESTED IN THE EVOLUTION OF THE GOOD FILM

We publish this interesting manifesto by the famous Hungarian camera-artist, not because we necessarily agree with all the views it expresses, but because we believe that bold criticism from a well informed source always gives a healthy stimulus.

SHALL we look on while the film, this wonderful instrument, is being destroyed before our eyes by stupidity and a dull-witted amateurism?

The unbiassed observer cannot fail to see, to his great distress, that the film production of the world is growing more and more trivial every year. To the trained eye and mind the present-day film can give no pleasure.

This criticism is not confined to the artistic side of film-making. The whole film industry is in danger. This is shown by its increasing incapacity to produce a financial return. Gigantic sums are swallowed up by desperate experiments, extravagance in superficial matters not strictly proper to the film; monster decorations, piling up of stars, paying huge salaries to secure performers who turn out unsuitable for filming. This expenditure will never bring in its return, so that the film is slipping back with increasing certainty into the hands of the adventurers, from whom it had been rescued after its initial period of being a purely speculative business.

II.

The root of all evil is the exclusion of the experimental film creator, of the free independent producer.

III.

Yesterday there were still crowds of pioneers in all countries; to-day the whole field is made a desert, mown bare. But art can know no further development without the artist, and art requires full sovereignty over the means to be employed. Every work of art attains its achievement only through the responsible activity of the artist, driven to his objective by his vision of the whole. This is true of architecture, of painting, of drama. It is equally true of the film, and cannot be otherwise.

IV.

From the nature of the film arises the difficulty of experimentation, the nursery-garden of good film work; for to the film there is attached a machinery of production and distribution, the organisation of which stretches from the scenario through acting, photography, sound recording, direction, and film-cutting up to press propaganda, leasing and cinema halls. Only thus could what was once a side-show at a fair be converted into a world-wide business.

Amongst the economic complications of this enormous machine the artistic aspect is treated so incidentally, judged so entirely from the mercantile standpoint, that the significance of the creative artist of the film is completely eliminated. One might almost say the director is forced through fear of penalisation to do without the cinematograph art. By becoming part of the prevailing system of production, even the best pioneers have, to the bitter disappointment of all those interested in films, sunk to the level of the average director. The independent producers were an embarrassment to the industry. The existence of the pioneers implied a destructive criticism of official production. The vitality of the small works, their faith in the cinematographic art, while hardly removing mountains, did box the ears of the industry soundly. They swung out for a counter-blow without realising the soundness of these pioneer movements, their effort to press forward on the artistic side. So the industry carefully stamped out anything which was even suggestive of pioneer effort. Their crowning victory was found in the necessity of specially constructed buildings for sound-film production and showing, and consequently the final business monopolisation of the "art of the film."

V.

The way was freed once more for mechanised business. The industry was victorious all along the line.

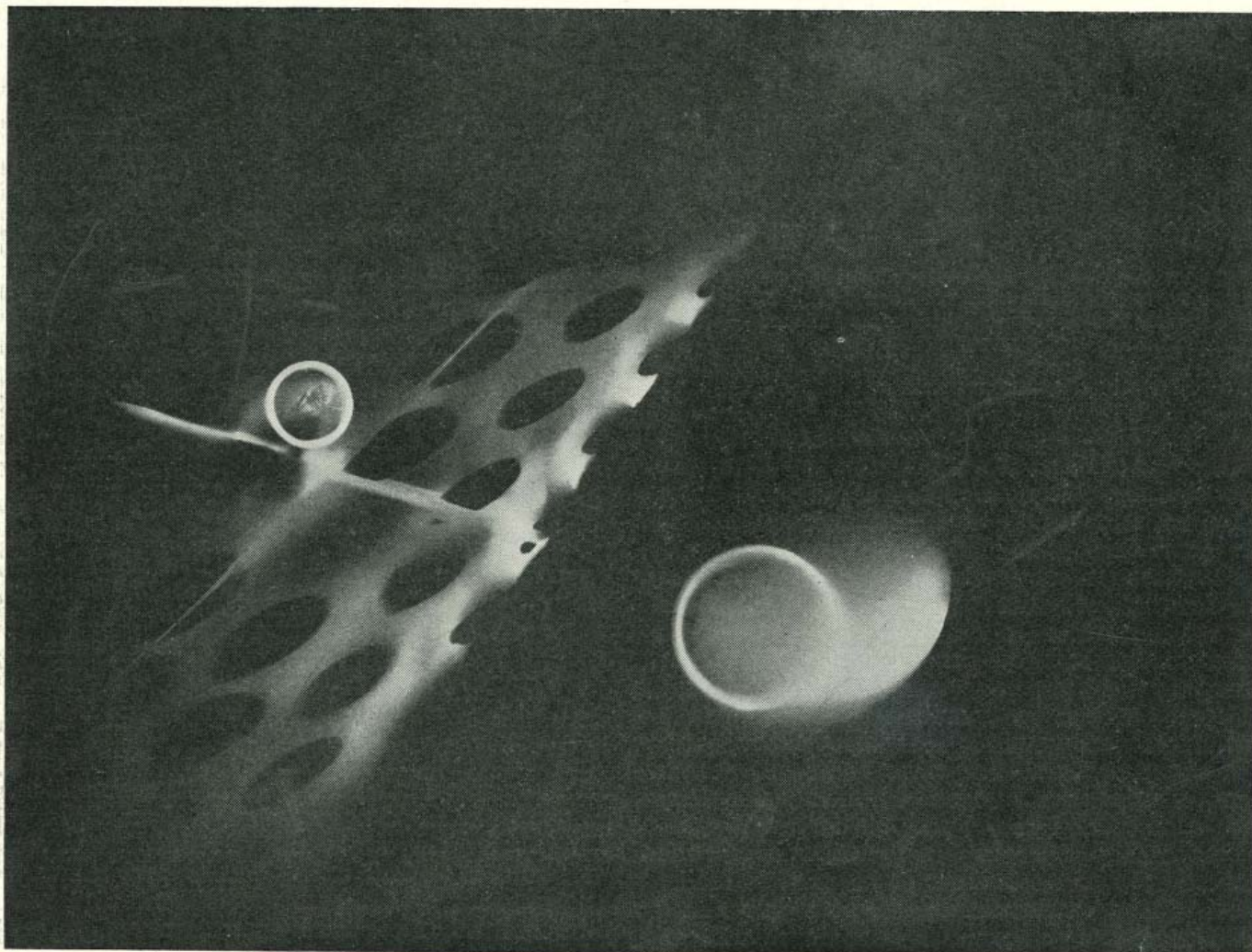
Everything contributed to help them; legislation regulations concerning quotas and import restrictions, censorship, leasing, cinema owners and short-sighted critics. But the victory of the industry has been a costly one. Art was to be destroyed in the interests of business, but the boomerang has whizzed back and struck the business side. People do not go to boring films, in spite of the calculation of returns made by the film magnate on the theory that every adult *must* visit the cinema twice weekly at an average price of so many cents, pennies, pfennigs or sous, per ticket.

VI.

Shall the artist now, after all the kicks he has received, turn round and help the business side to think? Shall he take a hand again, and beg with economic arguments for the weapons of the spirit that were struck from his hands?

VII.

Good, we will do so.
Now *we* start estimating profits.



Abstract composition by Moholy Nagy

VIII.

The culture of the film grew with the onlooker. History records no similar process of general passive participation, extending to all nations and continents, in an applied art and its development to that relating to the cinema. By the numerically enormous part played in human life generally by attendance at cinemas, even the most primitive member of an audience is in a position to exercise criticism of the film and register any slackening of creative interest. This means the necessity of straining every nerve in creative work. But where is that work to come from, if the artist is to be excluded from the creative process?

IX.

A pioneer group is thus not only an artistic but an economic necessity.

X.

All barriers against pioneer effort must therefore be removed. Encouragement, private, industrial and official, must therefore be extended to the independent cinematograph artist.

XI.

This means that we demand for him:—

- (1) From the State
 - (a) Removal of censorship restrictions.

- (b) No taxation on his creations.
- (c) Payment of allowances.

- (2) From the industry, in accordance with output.

- (a) Studio
- (b) Sound
- (c) Material
- (d) Obligatory performances by leasing agents and theatres.

- (3) Education in artistic film work must be begun long before the practical side. The antiquated art school curriculum must be replaced by the establishment of

- (a) Studios for lighting (artificial light)
- (b) Photo and film studios (camera technique)
- (c) Dramatic classes
- (d) Theoretical, physical and experimental departments.

XII.

To formulate and fight for these demands is terribly necessary at the present time, for our generation is beginning to exploit without initiative or talent the magnificent technical heritage of the previous century. It remains to be hoped that these statements of opinion will remind a few, at least, of the intellectual problems which the conscience of the thinking man bids him solve.

CINEMA OVERSEAS

THE FILM IN ABADAN

By J. D. Kelley

What does the cinema mean to a small British colony in an isolated corner of the world? Newsreel, light but not fantastic fare, and above all British comedies are in demand at Abadan, the headquarters of the Anglo Persian Oil Company, where audiences expect a high standard, but do not take their entertainment seriously

ABADAN is situated on an island bordered by the Rivers Shatt al Arab, Karun and Bamashir, approximately thirty miles south of Basra, Iraq, and eight miles south of Mohammerah, which is one of the chief ports of Southern Persia.

The town is the centre of the Anglo-Persian Oil Company's activities to which it owes its development. In addition to a large Persian and Arab population it possesses a European colony housed in some 240 well-built brick bungalows. During the cold period the British members of the Company's staff number nearly 500, of whom rather more than a quarter have their wives and families with them. During the summer the number is less, since a proportion of the staff go on leave.

Every facility is provided by the Company for the entertainment and recreation of its staff, including sports grounds, swimming baths, boat club and a central gymkhana club, which is equipped with an outside stage for concerts and cinema shows during the summer season. In the winter months these shows are held in the Club's dance hall, which has seating accommodation for 350 people.

The first film to be shown in Abadan was exhibited towards the end of 1922. Since then the cinema has been a consistent success and has done more possibly than any other single factor to make life tolerable in this isolated spot. Although the old silent film provided good entertainment, there was perhaps too much convention and not enough realism in its art to be quite satisfying to exiles in a foreign land. It left out much, like all true art, but the result was too austere for the inherent sentimentalism of the Englishman abroad. Then in the early part of 1932 a "talkie" machine was installed, to be followed later in the year by a better one made by Gaumont. The success of this latter was instantaneous.

It was not, perhaps, surprising that the news became the most popular item on the talkie programme. Instead of the cold, flickering shadows of the silent days, there were living, familiar scenes of home, bringing back vividly and clearly happy memories of leave and youth. The whole audience wallowed in sentimentality and loved it. They still do. Give an Abadan audience a picture of Piccadilly, with the roar of the traffic and the occasional hoot of a motor horn rising through the din, let them listen for a moment to the murmur of waves

on the beach and the laughter of holiday makers and they ask for nothing more. It may not be art, it may not even be beautiful, but it is food for imagination and memory. Some people in Abadan prefer the cinema to mail day—and perhaps nothing more need be said than that.

But if the cinema caters for sentimentalism, it also caters for entertainment. One of the chief criticisms thrown at the cinema at home is that it demands too little of the audience and is taken by them like a patent medicine. In an Abadan summer this is one of its chief merits. The films are exhibited during the summer out of doors on the lawn of the Gymkhana Club, but in spite of that, as the night temperature is around ninety, only very light and easily assimilated fare is acceptable.

But before detailing the tastes of the Abadan audience something must be said of its composition. Everybody in Abadan goes to the cinema. Most go regularly each week, the rest only when the programme is to their taste. The average standard of intelligence of the audience is both high and critical and silly films usually get the reception they deserve. All seats are the same price, namely 1s. 6d., and there is no fourpenny element to cater for, so that in one respect the audience is more like the audience of a film society show at home than of an ordinary cinema. The difference, of course, is that Abadan does not take the film seriously after the manner of film societies. A large part of the audience is made up of people who at home would probably seldom visit cinemas and so are not often catered for by the film companies. To these people the bulk of modern films seem trivial and rather silly, if not actually pernicious and misleading, and most of them take the film about as seriously as a detective story. But the fact that such an audience, visiting the cinema only because there is nowhere else to go and prejudiced from the beginning by the bad films they have seen before, can yet become enthusiastic about some of the more recent British films, seems to show very conclusively that the standard of British films is going up.

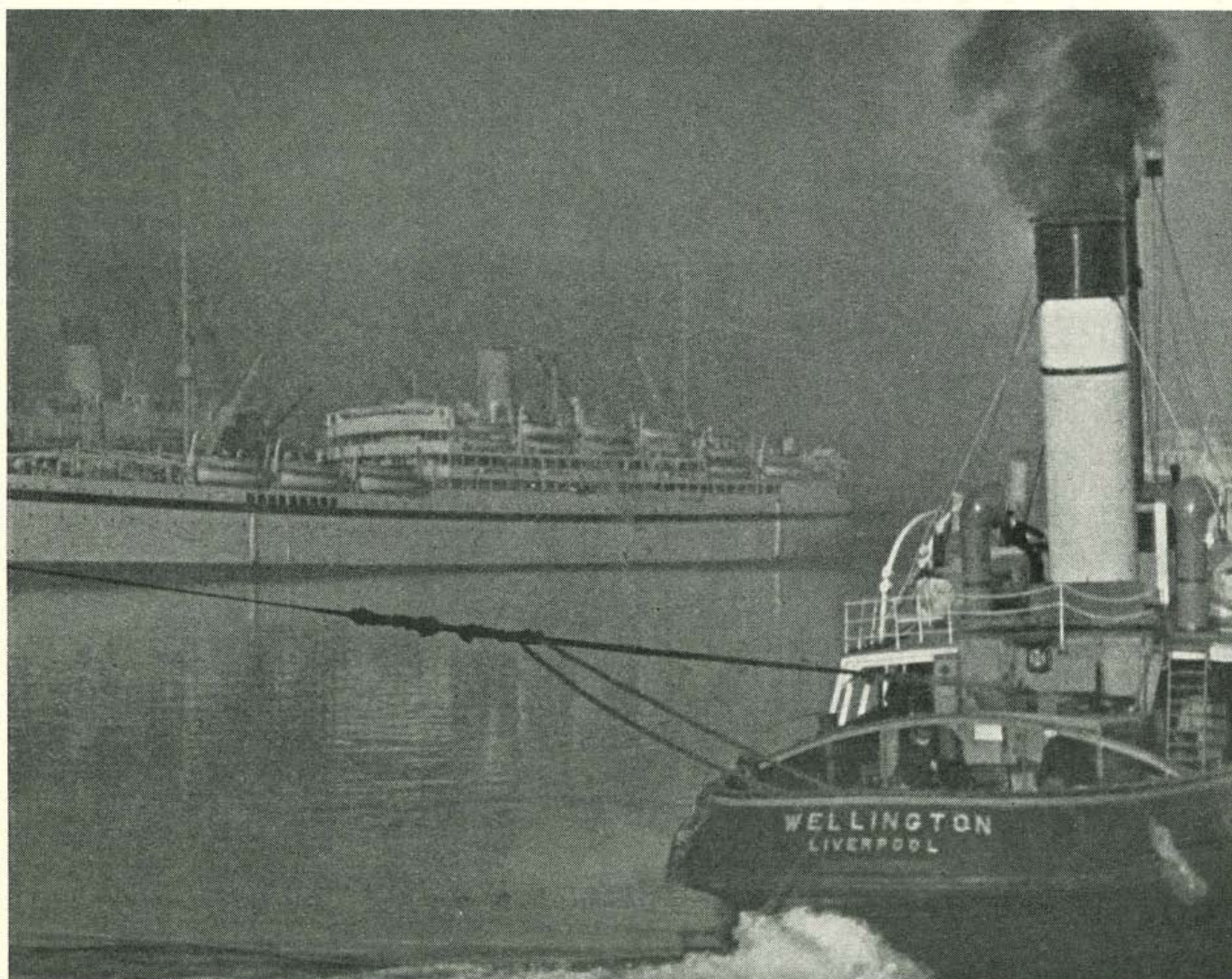
Further, at Abadan British films are very much preferred to American ones, though not entirely on patriotic grounds. Naturally a film about London has an *a priori* advantage over one about New York. But the preference goes deeper than that, and it can be summed up by saying that the American films are more emotional than the British. Somehow, in the placid, humdrum existence that most people lead in Abadan, such emotionalism seems rather unnecessary and even ludicrous. British films are so

much lighter in touch than American that they appeal more strongly to an audience that dislikes having its dormant emotions thrashed in public.

Perhaps the case would be made clearer by giving a few examples of the type of film that is popular with an Abadan audience. Last year Norma Shearer was their favourite star; now she has been displaced by Jessie Matthews, with Cicely Courtneidge running both pretty closely. Among the men, Ralph Lynn and Tom Walls probably head the list, with Jack Hulbert not far behind. American stars, even Garbo and Dietrich, are definitely unpopular and *City Lights* was a failure. This last might seem odd until it is remembered that above everything there is a demand for superficial reality, and *City Lights* was as unreal as a Shakespeare comedy. Song and dance shows are not popular either, but the cinema has been here long enough now for those responsible for choosing the films to know almost exactly what is required and few mistakes are made. This applies especially to films sent out from home and chosen by London Office—which covers about fifty per cent. of the total. The rest come from Baghdad and are a more mixed bag.

A typical Abadan cinema programme would consist of continuous news and perhaps a topical item for the first hour, followed by an interval for refreshments. After that would follow the main picture. Comedies are seldom shown and the majority of people prefer a shortened programme to having to sit through a typical comedy. There is something, too, about an Abadan cinema show that is reminiscent of a London theatre or, perhaps more, of an opera house in the last century. There is the same interest taken in neighbours, in the composition of parties and the securing of good seats. There is the same exchange of greetings and views during the interval and the same feeling of attending a social function as well as a show that must have permeated the old opera goers, when the opera was the centre of social life. The cinema, certainly, is the nearest thing to the centre of social life in Abadan, though the community is a little too large and diffuse to have an exact centre.

According to the usual policy of the Company with regard to amenities for the staff, they have themselves put down all the initial capital for the equipment, leaving the charge for admission to pay for all running expenses such as hire of film,



RISING TIDE, by Paul Rotha

(G. B. Instructional)

operators, etc. It is for this reason that the moderate sum of 1s. 6d. enables the latest films to be shown not long after their release. All films are shown privately to a Persian censor before exhibition. There are few cinemas in Persia and those mostly in the north.

Normally a picture is shown three nights a week to first class staff, who are mostly British and one night to second class employees who consist of the Persian, Indian and Armenian clerical staff and their families. Some of these know enough English to understand the plot, but the majority get rather a disjointed impression. They seem, however, to enjoy it. It is interesting to note that *City Lights* was not a particular success with the clerks either, and they obviously missed many of the jokes. The writer attended the clerks' show of this film out of interest, as it seemed to be the general opinion at home that its approval would be wider than usual. The situation did not seem quite simple enough, as Chaplin's earlier films used to be. Song and dance shows in general are the most popular with the clerks and they seem very interested in the news.

Educational Films in Abadan

Educational films are not a moral part of the Club cinema performances; but an experimental arrangement was made whereby the London Office sent out during 1933 selected instructional films bearing as far as possible on the work of the Company's technical and artisan apprentices. For the showing of these films a silent projector was erected in the artisan apprentice shop and apprentices once a fortnight on pay days spent an hour watching films during working hours. This arrangement was very popular among the apprentices and undoubtedly such films as *Paper Making*, *Cotton Growing*, *Cocoa Plantations*, etc. widened their outlook on the world and were of recreative value. Certain other films, such as the construction and assembly of a motor car, comparisons between the values of oil and coal for firing, welding and boiler making, shipbuilding, etc. were of real technical value. The only regrets with regard to the latter type were (1) that the films were somewhat old and torn and (2) that owing to customs regulations they could only be kept for the very short period of about three weeks in the country. This meant usually that there could only be one hurried showing and so the details of the subject could not be fully appreciated.

The cinema has great possibilities amongst apprentices in Abadan as an instructional agency. This type of Persian youth has not yet developed a desire only for the sensational or the comic on the films and he would thoroughly appreciate and derive much benefit from good films on hygiene, social life, sport, travel and nature films. On the technical and scientific side, films bearing on their daily work, such as engineering constructional work and on individual trades, such as fitting, turning, boiler-making, moulding and clerical work, showing how the individual handles his tools and tackles the work in hand, would be of immense value. To get

the best use of all these types of films a film library would have to be formed so that films could be available and drawn out when wanted at the right moment in the apprentices' course of training.

Until recently the cinema held undisputed sway as practically the only objective form of entertainment in Abadan, but since the completion of the new Empire Broadcasting Station a potentially serious rival has appeared. Until both the programmes and the quality of reproduction improve considerably, however, the cinema has little to fear. Reception is too erratic for programmes to be booked ahead with certainty. Even at home the habit of keeping a certain evening free to listen to a special wireless programme is still rare, though it is common enough to reserve a special evening for the cinema. Indeed, until reasonably critical selection can be applied to the choice of programmes, wireless must remain a novelty and often a nuisance.

Whatever critics of the cinema may say about films being trivial and inartistic, here in Abadan they have been an incalculably valuable boon. Not only does each week's film give people something immediate and rather exciting to look forward to, but for two hours the audience can be transported far away from dust, humidity and heat, back to England and home. And as a conversational gambit it has no equal. "What do you think of the film this week?" is heard at every dining table in Abadan, and for the latest batches of English films the answer is always the same, "Very good!"

ROYAL PHOTOGRAPHIC SOCIETY'S EXHIBITION

Sub-standard Film Contest

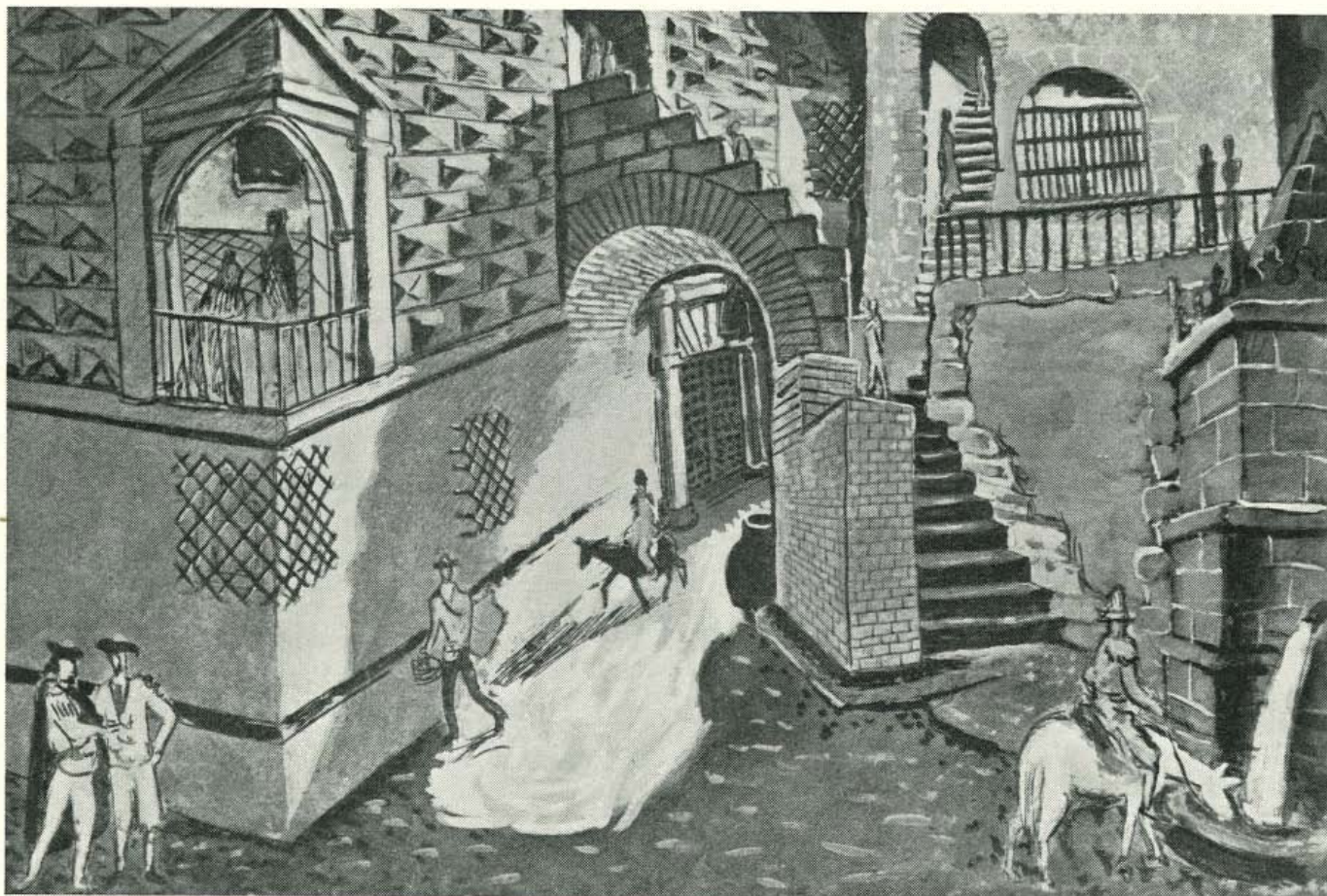
An exhibition of cinematography will be held at the galleries of The Royal Photographic Society, 35 Russell Square, London, W.C.1, during the month of November next. The exhibition will comprise apparatus, stills and films.

A feature of the exhibition will be a series of lectures on various aspects of cinematography, professional and amateur, by eminent authorities.

In conjunction with the exhibition a sub-standard film competition will be held, open to amateur and professional workers alike. The films may be silent or sound, and are limited to fifteen minutes' running time. Films accepted by the judges will be shown during the period of the exhibition and will be awarded certificates. A plaque will also be placed at the disposal of the judges for the most meritorious film submitted.

Further information and entry forms may be obtained on application to the Secretary, Royal Photographic Society, 35 Russell Square, London, W.C.1.

We regret that an error occurred in a note appearing on page 2 of our last issue, which should read: "On March 14 Mr. R. S. Lambert gave evidence on behalf of the Governors of the British Film Institute before the Select Committee of Public Estimates at the House of Commons concerning the film activities of the General Post Office."



One of Vincent Korda's designs for *DON JUAN*, by Alexander Korda (London Films Ltd.) which is to be the first film shown at the London Pavilion when it re-opens in September after reconstruction

SPECIALISED CINEMA IN FRANCE

THE AUDIENCE AND THE FILM

By Georges Clarrière

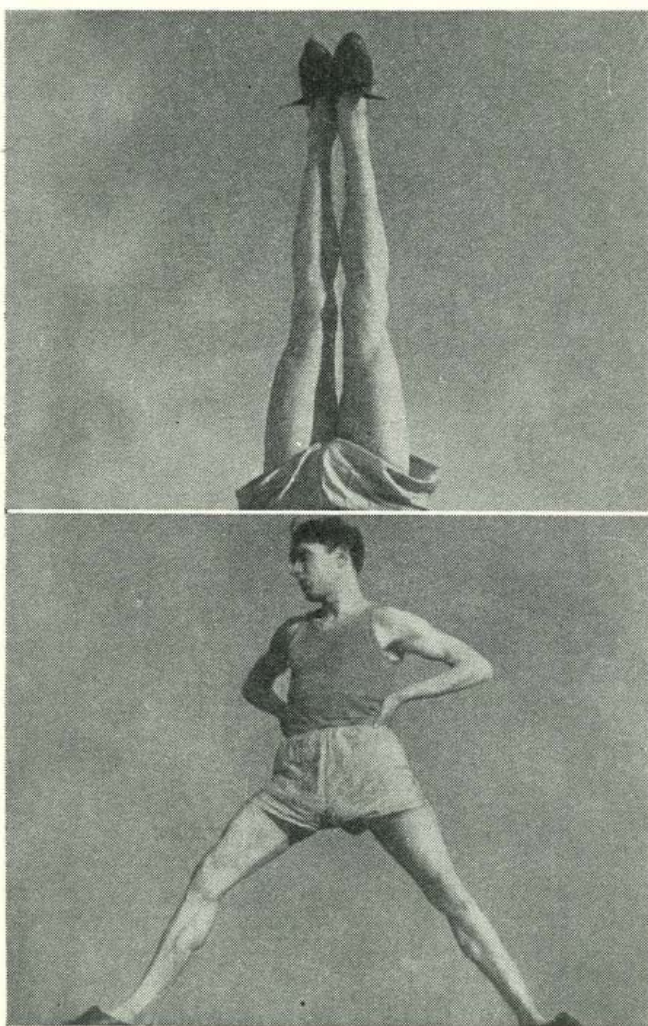
THE struggle in France between the exploiters of American and other foreign films and those who deal with national French productions is a matter which might be of interest to British exhibitors and especially those who are faced with a similar proposition. The distribution of a foreign film is always a problem, whatever its origin, although America has the advantage of knowing how to make such pleasant entertainment out of the most insignificant subjects that they often afford much pleasure to foreigners, even to those who do not in the least understand the American language.

In Great Britain, where the public is now almost familiar with Americanisms, and where American screen stars are so well-known, the problem of exhibition is not so difficult as it is in France. The Latin mind does not "take" easily to American films, and cannot understand the reason for certain thoughts and actions expressed on the screen which may be perfectly intelligible to the mind of an English audience. Hence for circulation in France, American and all other foreign films have to be graded, as well as very carefully edited, either with

dialogues doubled in French or with the addition of French sub-titles. This necessary process has led to the creation of speciality halls—*salles de spécialité*—where "unusual" films may be shown successfully. The same films, exhibited in popular halls, would turn spectators away.

In Paris, at the present time, there are seventeen halls in which American talking pictures are presented with their American dialogue supplemented by sub-titles in French. There are eleven other halls in which American and other films are presented with the original dialogues and without French sub-titles. And there are nine others which just occasionally present a grand American film spectacle in its original state.

This does not, however, mean that there are thirty-seven speciality halls in Paris. There are, in reality, about seventeen all told. The speciality halls, on the average, contain about five hundred seats each. It will therefore be realised that, except under special circumstances, it would not pay to show the biggest American and other foreign productions in such small halls. It has therefore been found



LE MILE: Two shots from a fine production by Jean Lods, a leading director of documentary films in France to-day. Review on page 72

necessary to grade all films, French or foreign; foreign films doubled in French, as well as foreign films with French sub-titles. (The experiment was once tried of presenting a foreign film, allowing the music to pass but suppressing the dialogue, putting French sub-titles in its place. It was, however, a failure, because the action employed in a talking picture is quite unlike that employed in the days of silent production. In fact, despite sub-titles, spectators could not properly follow the story.)

The question of trading is a complex one. As an instance, and from the purely commercial point of view, let us take the Fox production *Liliom*, produced in French. This excellent film (which is reminiscent of the old German film *The Ascension of Hanele Mattern* was probably originally intended for general exhibition, but, on presentation, it was considered to be an "unusual" film, and, had it been put out on general release, it would have failed disastrously. But presented simultaneously in three speciality theatres it scored a success, and in one of the theatres it ran for two months.

As regards foreign films presented in foreign languages exhibiting is even more difficult. That very fine British film, *The Private Life of Henry*

VIII, which was by no means unanimously applauded, even in its own country, was a doubtful proposition for a French public; yet in the Lord Byron cinema, a speciality hall, its presentation was an immense success. Since its first showing it has not gone into any of the big French cinema circuits, but is going the round of independent halls which make a point of showing unusual films to a regular patronage of better class audiences. The same treatment is being given to the British productions *The Constant Nymph* and *Sorrell and Son*, both of which have received excellent press notices.

Experience with French audiences shows that it does not do to shock the public taste or sentiment by the unconsidered presentation of however fine a foreign production. Forcing a film by means of a battery of publicity upon the patrons of a large and popular hall is often to invite disaster, and it has put many a fine production quite out of running for acceptance in the large circuit halls. The French public will not be forced into admiring anything, and the more violent the publicity methods the more wary are the patrons. It offends their taste, and they tell their neighbours that the film was "not so bad, but . . ." The general exploitation throughout the country is often thereby ruined. Whereas if the same film had first been presented in a speciality theatre or in a Boulevard cinema of special distinction, the public would have been "humoured" into accepting it, and it could then have been put out on general release. It might even stand a good chance of being taken by one of the large French circuits, and it would then have been assured of a provincial showing.

Many a fine film, French or foreign, is never seen outside Paris and the Parisian area; by reason, very probably, of bad initial publicity. A French film which is produced or a foreign film which is edited from the Parisian point of view, and from that only, is almost certainly doomed to failure in the provinces. Paris does not represent all France no more than London represents the British Isles.

The French public does not take films seriously, it accepts them as entertainment pure and simple. As far as foreign films are concerned, and especially American ones, this is a very sensible attitude of mind, for it often avoids disappointment. The British public, on the contrary, seems to devour films, and, with the result that in certain provincial districts particularly, there are people who do not often go to the cinema because, taking pictures too seriously—and doing so in spite of themselves—the entertainment provided simply gets on their nerves. The overwhelming preference for musical comedy films, rather than melodrama shows that the cinema should be considered as light entertainment in England. In France, however, strong drama, and especially stories of deep intrigue, are much more appreciated than "cabaret scenes" and dancing girls; while merely spectacular films (trains falling over bridges, burning battleships, avalanches and the like) are merely considered as photographic tricks. Over-sentimental subjects, such as "East Lynne" or "The Rosary" are simply laughed at.

A FILM COUNCIL FOR SCOTLAND

A conference representative of interested bodies in Scotland held at Glasgow on June 23rd decided to form a Scottish National Film Council in association with the British Film Institute.

The following resolutions were adopted :

1. That steps be taken for the formation of a Scottish Film Council which shall be an integral part of the British Film Institute, but which, in view of the special circumstances of Scotland, shall have a larger degree of autonomy than is normally accorded to branches of the Institute.

2. That such Scottish National Film Council shall be organised on a functional and not on a regional basis.

3. That an executive committee be appointed to consider the foregoing resolutions in consultation with the British Film Institute and to frame and bring into operation a detailed scheme.

An interim executive committee has been appointed as follows :

Representing film societies: Norman Wilson, John R. Allan; representing schools and colleges: Harry Blackwood, George A. Burnett, M.A.; representing the film trade: John A. Houston, C.A., George Salmon; representing the general public: J. Walter Buchan, Dr. J. W. Low and Miss M. G. Cowan, O.B.E.

INTERNATIONAL CONFERENCE ON SUB-STANDARD FILM

A conference called by the International Film Institute of Rome and held at Stresa, Italy, on June 24th and 25th, was attended by technical representatives from the principal film producing countries.

One of the most important questions discussed was the question of adopting one international standard for 16mm. films. A committee of five technicians met, consisting of the following: M. Debie (France), Dr. Rahts (Germany), Captain P. Kimberley (Great Britain), Signor Mauro (Italy) and Mr. N. J. Garling (U.S.A.).

After discussion it was agreed by four of the committee—Mr. Garling dissenting—that the system known as the D.I.N. should be adopted as the standard. At a subsequent meeting of the committee it was unanimously agreed to recommend that the Governors convey to the S.M.P.E. of the United States an offer made by the representatives of the European countries that, in the interests of all concerned it would be advantageous if one international standard could be adopted. To secure this end the European representatives expressed their willingness to recommend to the Governing Body of the Institute the adoption of a standard whereby the placing of the emulsion would conform to the S.M.P.E. System and the location of the sound-track would conform to the D.I.N. system.

The Governing Body of the International Film Institute adopted the recommendations of the Technical Committee and decided to forward them to the proper quarters.

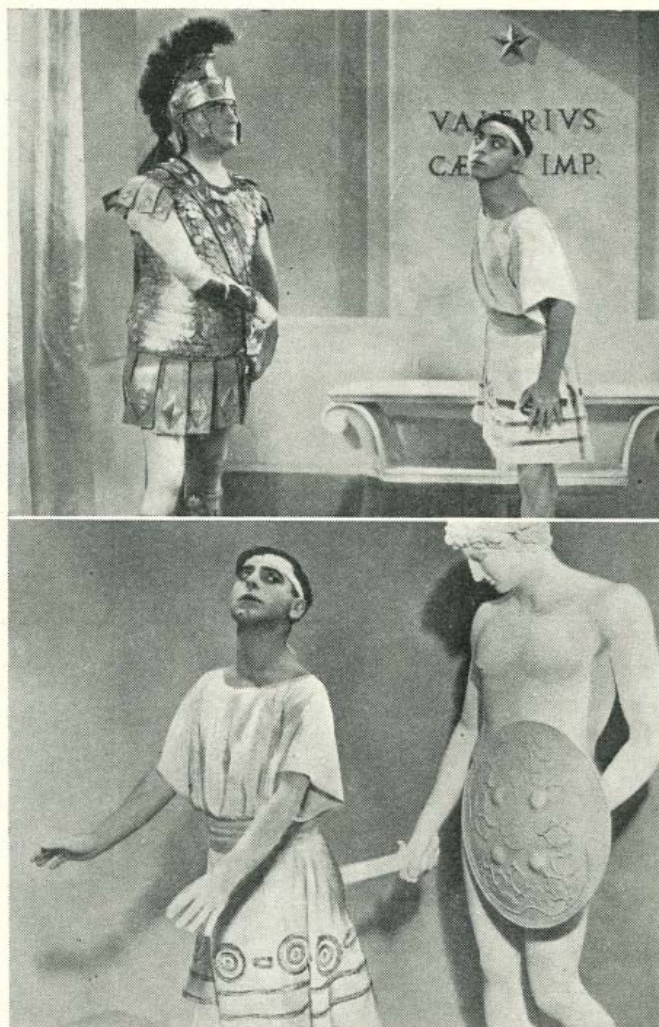
"CONTACTING"

By Vera Denis-Earle

Mrs. Denis-Earle is responsible for collecting some of the material used in the well-known Cinemagazine, edited by Mr. Andrew Buchanan, who is now in charge of the "Gaumont British Magazine."

FINDING subjects for films—a process known as "Contacting"—is an art and an education in itself. For, in the building up of "interest" films which are intended to instruct and to entertain, to be topical is to risk treading on the toes of the newsreel and to be fictional is outside our province altogether. Certainly at times one cannot afford to let a topical find slip by entirely, but if, for example, I enter a dress exhibition and find that the newsreel is already there, I merely pounce on, say, a trouser or two, to illustrate, with various examples from the museums, my story of the evolution of the queer pipe-like monstrosities that cover the male leg.

But, for the most part, during the long bright summer days, we tour the countryside in search of picturesque places and people, quaint customs still surviving, old industries still in use, the odd and the romantic Indeed, we ferret out anything and



Eddie Cantor in the United Artists farce ROMAN SCANDALS

everything that is likely to entertain. For such work as this, the fact that I once ran a tramp shelter, and that I have caravanned, has stood me in good stead. For it is on the road, sharing sandwiches with wayfarers; on the Downs, hunting up friendly shepherds, and round the fires of gipsy camps, almost without exception, that I have been given my choicest "tips." When one's "subjects" are simple people it is not always easy to persuade them to be filmed, and the true gipsy, for instance, is usually reticent about his fascinating haunts, beliefs and customs, genuinely fearing the camera's "Evil Eye." Hence they are a difficult people to pose since they are apt to stand stiffly to attention, intrigued by, but deeply suspicious of, the whole concern—when one is lucky enough to induce them to be photographed at all! But a knowledge of their ways, a sincere love of the country and rustic folk, and a few packets of "shag" can work wonders. Though, in the case of the gipsies, all their promises to the contact worker may be broken if he has been unable to await the cameraman who, a stranger with a "magic box," is at a tremendous disadvantage when he arrives, alone, upon the scene. Therefore, when dealing with remote country subjects, it is often best for the contact worker and the cameraman to work together, though it is usual, of course, for the former to save time and money by going ahead and paving the way.

Again, individual craftsmen in isolated places are often, despite detailed directions, difficult for the cameraman to locate. I remember an old Buckinghamshire "bodger" who worked alone in the heart of the forest, felling his tree and camping by it until he had converted the rough wood into chair-legs. The only way I could be sure of his being located again was by getting him to accompany me to the highway and scattering pieces of paper, like snow flakes, to mark his track as he returned to his primitive camp!

But such problems are insignificant as compared with the problem of *lighting* which, in my own experience, too often involves the shelving of some of the cream of our work. For it follows that the rarer and more isolated a subject the less likely we are to find any available system of lighting. Hence many a superb old building remains closed to us because it is dark inside; and the beautiful basic crafts of primitive factories and cottages go unfilmed, to our sorrow, because, while thousands of pounds may be spent, say, upon staging fictitious murders, we cannot afford to carry our own lights.

Indirectly, it is the problem of lighting, again, that drives us to the cities in the winter. While the fog removes all possibility of carrying on outside, subjects are built up in the studios, where at least the problem of lighting does not exist. Some of the most interesting of these concern:—

1. Origins and evolutions. Take any article in common use to-day and trace it back through the ages to its actual origin; a fascinating task, for the success of which to some extent one is dependent upon obtaining permission to take stills of selected objects from various museums. But there is

seldom any stumbling-block here. Indeed, I have found consents to film are quite frequently given plus any amount of encouragement and very helpful advice. Either museum authorities tend to be gloriously film-minded or else they are disarmed at the outset by one's sheer enthusiasm for "getting good stuff across" via one of the finest mediums of expression in the world, to touch even the fringe of which, in so humble a capacity as my own, is an experience which fills one with keenness and with awe.

2. Artists and craftsmen who can be filmed at their work, either in their own studios, or in ours against special sets built up for them. Thus the film-goer sees masks, flowers, books, pots, tools, instruments, etc., apparently, and with amazing swiftness, begun and completed before him while he sits back and watches every trick of the trade. Actually, of course, the "subject" brings his raw material with him plus several models of his work at various stages, and a finished article.

3. Factories and Institutions.

4. Famous (and rare!) people who can say something extremely brief, constructive, popular and to the point.

5. Imaginative interpretation of facts, including time and speed subjects.

6. Old London. Here one has a wealth of material to select from; the romance of the Thames; of ancient crafts and customs still prevailing but steadily vanishing—unheeded—in our midst; of the exquisite old buildings which too often go under the hammer and have no immortality even upon the screen . . . so that one thinks in terms of lovely sequences and sighs to find how seldom single subjects, along these lines, are used.

Looking in at the studios the two points that most impress me are, first, the way in which quite slender subjects are rendered fascinating and impressive by judicious handling and clever camera work and secondly, the vision and sagacity of Mr. Andrew Buchanan who, by his ingenious commentary and amusing sequences, holds his public by pleasing while he instructs.

Those of us who take this work really seriously, genuinely loving it as an art, pregnant with tremendous possibilities, it is a matter of grave concern when the interest feature is commercialised and curtailed.

I cannot but regard any cutting down, rather than increasing of, this type of film as disastrous. Is it not in the nature of a calamity for the film-future of this country that so much fine material lies idle, while cheap fiction is so lavishly imported and big profits tempt Big Business to deny the growing minority who are demanding "good stuff"?

Eleven daylight cinema vans are touring the country on a propaganda campaign for the National Government. The films have been chosen to demonstrate the achievements of the Government and will include short pictures on agriculture, the Empire and "The Great Recovery." Before beginning their tour the vans were inspected by the Prime Minister, Mr. Stanley Baldwin and Sir John Simon.



From the Russian film *THE SOIL IS THIRSTY* (Raismann) which will be shown in this country by B. & N. Films. It has been cut down by the renters to less than four reels and re-recorded

SOUND RHYTHM AND THE FILM

RECENT RESEARCH ON THE COMPOUND CINEMA

By Ernest J. Borneman

An extract from a new film book now in preparation: "The Mechanised Muse," a synthesis of the compound cinema, based on the theories and experiments of the D.F.I., the late German Film Research Institute, which is probably the first institution of its kind to have undertaken a scientific investigation of the cinema

THE first experiment attempted in sound montage was carried out before sound film itself was invented. This remarkable investigation into the principles of a future art was executed by the German Film Research Institute in Berlin. The film was produced by the Institute's theoretical group and made by Edmund Meisel, the composer of the musical scores for *Potemkin* and *October*.

Meisel analysed the montage of some famous silent films in regard to rhythm, emphasis, emotional

climax and mood. To each separate shot he assigned a certain musical theme. Then he directly combined the separate themes, using the rhythm, emphasis and climaxes of the visual montage for the organisation of his music. He wished to prove by this experiment that the montage of a good film is based on the same rules and develops in the same way as music. The result of this experiment was that some so-called 'good' films did not in any way produce music, but merely a chaos of various themes, unordered and unorganised. Others of the films which he chose, however, resulted in a kind of strange rhapsody, unaccustomed and extraordinary to the ear, but nevertheless not without a certain musical continuity. By far the best result was from Eisenstein's *Potemkin*.

It was then objected that Meisel could not possibly expect an ordinary silent film to be complete in its musical montage. For, with the exception of 'absolute' films, montage is concerned with the task of developing content and not with a peculiar rhythm and melody of its own. But we admitted that there ought to be a possibility of constructing films according to the rules of music. They could only be perfect, however, if the composer of the music was also a co-worker on the scenario and, secondly, if the music could be so perfectly synchronised that the time of cutting and time of music corresponded exactly.

We did not then foresee the excellent possibilities of synchronisation which were to be brought about by the advent of sound film. But as soon as we obtained our first sound-camera we resumed our experiments. As we had not a composer available we tried to discover music suitable to our use and after long search discovered an African negro gramophone record of which the rhythm seemed strong enough for a visual rhythmic montage to be fitted to it.

Musical Montage

We combined a corresponding montage of camera and microphone with parallel rhythmic cutting of visual and audible images, but it had no relation to the idea of 'reverie' in visual images fitted to accompanying music, such as was attempted in Eisenstein's *Romance Sentimentale* and Ruttman's *In Der Nacht*. These latter pictures were based on the *content* of the music, while our experiments proceeded from the *shape* of the music; meaning time, rhythm, counterpoint, the melodic curve, vigour and faintness, crescendo and decrescendo, accord and discord, harmony and discord. Work on these experiments at the Institute developed into three stages. The first was merely concerned with the filmic expression of time and rhythm. We began with synchronised cutting from one shot to the next in time and rhythm with the music. Later we tried a rhythmical variation in the intensity of light in shots of longer duration. The object of this was to prevent the spectator from becoming tired by the excessive short cutting which the quick rhythm of the music logically demanded. In practise, this was done by superimposing the original film script with short flashes of light which appeared to synchronise with the bars of the music.

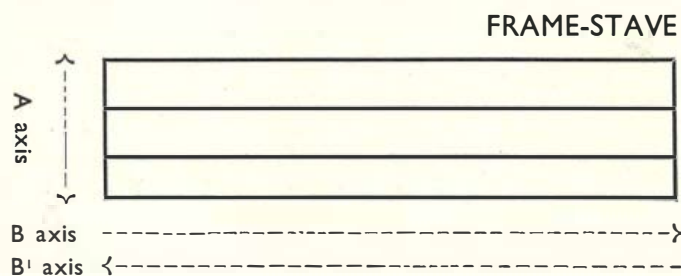
Then we thought of moving the camera itself. We used panning, travelling and flying camera shots not only to show things from unusual angles but to interpret their inner sense and value by musical movement. Time and rhythm, for example, could now be expressed by horizontal and vertical to-and-fro movements, crescendo and decrescendo by approaching and retreating the camera, the melodic curve by a corresponding curve-movement of the camera. Slow-motion and ultra-rapid-motion were used to represent musical time variations; fade-in and fade-out for musical increase and decrease;

one-turn one-picture for syncopation; prisms for accords; composite shots and double-exposures for various sorts of harmonies and discords. We found that it was even possible to express complicated musical occurrences as well as instrumental tricks by pure filmic camera means. Refrains, for instance, might be expressed by the frequent repetition of a certain series of shots, or ever-recurring themes might be represented by the underlining of certain images. Instrumental tricks like mutes might be clearly interpreted by gauzes, mirror distortions and distorting lenses.

Pictorial Music

The second of the experiments ignored all camera devices and returned to ordinary realistically photographed scenes. It seemed perhaps a reactionary movement towards common movie-shooting but, after a few minutes, spectators to whom we were showing our film (without music) said that they were strangely moved by something on the screen but that they could not explain the reason.

The explanation was that we had directed the pictorial movement itself in the sense of musical movement. To explain the idea let us imagine the screen to be part of the musical staff.



Vertical movement (A axis): rhythm or time.

Horizontal movement (B and B¹ axis): melody or tune; filmic notation.

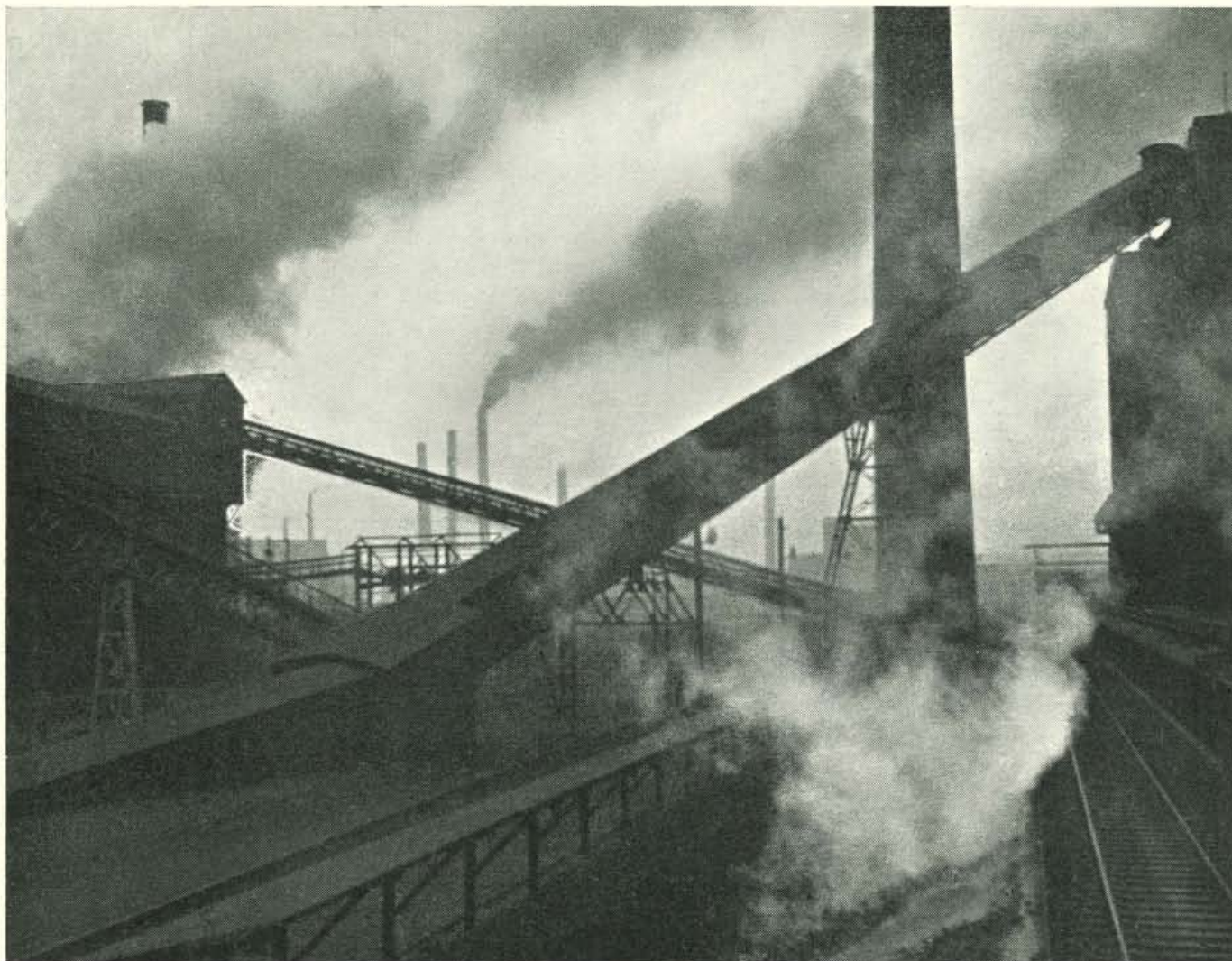
B¹ axis represents the Hebrew method of notation (i.e., from right to left) as opposed to our own system, from left to right; both directions being used in film notation.

All vertical movements (A axis) would therefore express melody, while all horizontal movements would represent rhythm or time (B axis).

It is obvious that our system left-to-right musical notation is not peculiar to our musical feeling, but merely analogous to our writing, which notates in this direction. Analogies to Hebrew handwriting could notate from right to left (B¹ axis) without altering the system).

Our experimental film to illustrate pictorial music was constructed as follows:

A fugitive convict with an electric torch in his hand is slinking along a fence, the base of which is revealed by the beams of the lamp. For this we composed special music to express the emotions of the man. Our idea was that all movements of the music should be strengthened by corresponding movements of the torch-light on the bars of the railings. The trembling hand of the convict betrayed his emotions which were at the same time expressed in music. From the light moving in a



Smoke and steel in the industrial north: from Rotha's *RISING TIDE* (G.B.I.)

horizontal direction there resulted a regular tom-tom rhythm without peculiar melodious character on the bars. But hesitation, retardation and acceleration gave rhythmical variations. When the tune ascended the light wandered upwards, when it descended it wandered downwards; when the song swelled it came nearer, at a decrescendo it moved away.

Synthesis

The last experiment re-established a connection between the first experimental series of musical montage and that of pictorial music. It again showed the movement of a visual image on the screen according to an audible image in the music. The audience receives exactly the same impression if an object moves to and fro before the camera, or if the camera moves to and fro before an object. With this in mind we tried to fuse both ideas into one for the purpose of employing such a synthesis in our first sound film and in 1931 we crystallised our results into a summary. As an example of this I should like to mention the categories *Crescendo* and *Decrescendo*.

Crescendo always means something 'triumphant,' if it is used in an emotional sense expressing moods, feelings and excitements. If degraded to a mere

depicting of character it might also mean something approaching. Both elements are to be found in film. *Crescendo* might merely mean the approaching of a certain object, or, if used in a symbolic sense, both the approaching of a sympathetic object and the retreating of an unsympathetic object. Moreover, in a still more abstract sense, it means the victory, the success of a sympathetic object; or the defeat, the failure of an unsympathetic object.

Decrescendo, of course, presents precisely the opposite.

Results

One of the most important results of this series of experiments is the surprising discovery that the musical accompaniment of films is not so stimulating as we are inclined to believe. Thus, for instance, all principles cited above prove correct only in non-vocal music. For all *sung* music in the film weakens the visual image instead of strengthening it. The spectator tries to understand the words of the song instead of understanding the picture.

An exception from this general rule, of course, is formed by all songs of which the words are a direct part of the narrative continuity, or also the exceptional cases where the beauty of a voice is more important than the film as such.



FILMS OF THE QUARTER

by
Paul Rotha

George Arliss as Meyer Rothschild in *THE HOUSE OF ROTHSCHILD*, by Alfred Werker (United Artists)

THE quarter's films have been seasonable; the drought of even moderately interesting pictures continues, inasmuch that there is scarcely a handful worth selecting for your approval. Documentary has made the most important contribution to the cinemas in the shape of Flaherty's *Man of Aran*, reviewed elsewhere, and the qualities of this not great but good film show up the artificiality which seems to have come to stay in amusement films.

Slickness of production values has probably never been slicker. Range of subject has reached an intrusion into the sacred ground of the classics. Yet there is a monotony about the whole line-up of pictures such as I cannot remember for many cinema years, due to a mental slump in the men who inhabit the studios. True, none of the big names of cinema figures in the season's programmes. Pabst, Clair, Lubitsch, Chaplin, Milestone, Pudovkin have been silent. Pabst's first Hollywood effort awaits release. Clair has just finished a picture. Milestone has made many announcements without materialisation. Possibly the year's advance will see more of what cinema should be.

Meanwhile, there is one film which deserves some acknowledgment, not so much for its subject but for its more than clever treatment. In *Blood Money* (hideous title) Rowland Brown has written a story along accepted gangster lines which contains sufficient popular ingredients to permit him making a commercially successful film but at the same time providing scope for an expression of his personal comments. Almost every line of dialogue is written with a purpose; every scene needs watching closely to appreciate fully its significance. Socially its characterisation, especially that of the millionaire's

daughter, is valuable and it would be ungrateful to omit mention of Judith Anderson's admirable performance. Maybe it has not the same brilliant continuity as its forerunner *Quick Millions*, but at least it demonstrates that intelligent direction is not quite dead in cinema.

The successful costume tradition has been kept well alive with two pictures representing entirely different types of cinema. With *The House of Rothschild*, George Arliss appears in what is perhaps his best effort to date largely because it is something more than a vehicle to exploit his fatherly theatrical talents. It is not, I suggest, a film that means very much to cinema but the topical references of the subject together with its well conducted performances will meet with general approbation among audiences who admire this type of Gentile make-belief. Of Sternberg's *Scarlet Empress*, I find it hard to write, because I laughed so much at the director's methods and the overwhelming showmanship which thickly guilds the story of Russia's Catherine that I was in no fit state to do it justice. But when every scene bears semblance to something you have seen before, when settings are so "artistic" that they nauseate, when lechery is dressed up in superb photography, when Dietrich is more beautifully dumb than ever before and when every character is made to overplay the smallest action—then there is nothing to do save laugh at the skill with which this Sternberg hoodwinks his disciples. As a pastime it must be expensive, yet there is said to be economy in Hollywood.

Someone remarked that the most important thing about *Viva Villa!* was its inordinate length, but its two hours of despoiling what might have been a

great film subject combined with its predominance of brutality, was upsetting. Wallace Beery is a good enough player to watch in small amounts. Beery snivelling in the best Dressler tradition and being thoroughly American while interpreting the great Mexican bandit is not a welcome spectacle. On the other hand, something of the vast panoramic sweep of Villa's life filters through to the screen, although it might have been wiser had Howard Hawks completed the picture instead of the assignment being handed to Jack Conway, a song and dance director. James Wong Howe, the Chinese cameraman, contributes some nice photographic fluffiness after an obvious inspection of Tissé's *Que Viva Mexico*.

Continental films have not shown up well of recent months. Although most of the new imports provide entertaining moments, none is outstanding. The most attractive was Kirsnaov's slight affair *Rapt*, shown at the Curzon, slight because superficial, but well put together, directed with considerable camera insight and despite a lurid story of abduction and incendiarism showed the director worthy of more serious material. Of others, *Pecheur d'Island* from Loti's famous story, was sensitively made but lacked cinematic understanding; *Charlemagne*, a delightful satire which had the sparkle of the authentic French movie mind in Colombier's direction; and *Liebes Kommando*, a prettily made and charmingly acted comedy of the girl-in-man's-uniform variety, from the experienced sentimental hand of Geza von Bolvary.

The output from the home studios has been plentiful but not inspiring. Two pictures call for inclusion in our notes, Victor Saville's *Evergreen*, which demonstrated all the technical polish which money can buy and revealed a maturer Jessie Matthews; and *The Crime on the Hill*, a thriller made by Bernard Vorhaus with unusual dexterity, suggesting that here is a director to watch.

Two lavish productions issued from the Goldwyn mantle, both of which maintained a high standard of superficial negligence. Superbly photographed and sumptuously produced, *Roman Scandals* exploited the female form in general and Eddie Cantor in particular, while *Lady of the Boulevards* gave us the newly groomed Anna Sten in an entirely

original conception of Zola's *Nana*, so original in fact that you need not know your literature. Among lesser programme pictures have been several most amusing leisure moments. *The Thin Man*, for example, with William Powell playing for comedy, was exceptionally good movie and W. C. Fields proved his irresistibly engaging self in a first-rate Paramount farce *You're Telling Me*.

Among new and forthcoming productions of interest are Alexander Korda's film, *The Private Life of Don Juan*, which has just been completed at the London Film Productions' studio at Elstree. The settings have been designed by Vincent Korda, who was responsible for the settings for *The Private Life of Henry VIII* and of *Catherine the Great*; and the photographer is again Georges Perinal. The story was written by Frederick Lonsdale and Lagos Biro. The cast includes Douglas Fairbanks and Merle Oberon. *Kongo Raid*, another London Films production (based on Edgar Wallace's early stories of the West Coast of Africa, *Sanders of the River*), is being directed by Zoltan Korda.

Victor Saville is producing for Gaumont British *The Iron Duke*, a film of the Duke of Wellington's career from the Hundred Days to the Treaty of Paris. H. M. Harwood has written the story and George Arliss will play the lead.

Alfred Hitchcock's next picture is *The Man Who Knew Too Much*. Peter Lorre, who took the part of the criminal in Fritz Lang's "M," plays the chief part.

Two films by Frank Borzage have arrived from America; *Little Man, What Now?* based on Hans Fallada's novel; and an adaption of a play by Ferencz Molnar called *No Greater Glory*.



A scene from *THE BATTLE*, by Farkas, in which Merle Oberon and Charles Boyer play leading parts. To be released in August (Gaumont)



MAN OF ARAN, by Robert Flaherty

(Gaumont-British)

DOCUMENTARY FILMS

MAN OF ARAN (British)

Production: Gainsborough. Direction and Photography: Robert J. Flaherty. Assistants: John Taylor and John Goldman. Music: John Greenwood. Sound. 35m. 6,832 ft. Release: July 30th, 1934. G. B. Distributors.

Hope has been built upon hope around this picture of Flaherty's, for at last here was the father of documentary with an honest break to do something big in a manner after his own heart. Two long years in the making, month after month of waiting by we poor folk who knock out a humble living at backdoor documentary, and the film is here to give us more or less of what we expected and something else beyond. In all respects it is the best work that Flaherty has done in cinema and in its particular sphere represents the furthest lengths to which documentary of this sort has been taken. But I would lay emphasis on category, for *Man of Aran* pursues only one of the several paths of documentary and must be considered only within those limits.

There are moments in the film which are among the greatest things that cinema can show, which means at the least that they provide both a mental and a physical experience which is unforgettable. There are moments when the instinctive caressing of the camera over the movements of a boy fishing or of men against the horizon bring a flutter to your senses; so beautiful in feeling and so perfect in realisation that their image is indelible. And again there are softer passages where you have to collect your thoughts and wonder if the sequence construction is built up quite so firmly as documentary of any branch demands; and whether dawdling over a woman carrying wet seaweed across the shore, beautiful in itself to behold, does not tend to weaken the main shape of the picture. It might be that two minds have disagreed, each seeking the major issue of the theme and each finding a different answer. Either the dramatic grandeur of the sea or the thrill of the sharks must take precedence, but they disturbingly share the peak between them. So great is Flaherty's shooting of the sea, nothing

like it has ever been seen on the screen and so overwhelming the sweep of the Atlantic that the sharks, I feel, are commonplace. It is true that they spell box-office to the commercial mind, but in such a film as this such considerations should be superfluous.

Beyond this small point, raised only because of the film's stature, *Man of Aran* is unique for its quality of visual loveliness. Seldom have such superb scenes lightened the movie screen, and only in previous Flaherty pictures have we seen that anticipation and awareness of natural movement which is Flaherty's particular genius. Here and there were scenes which I could watch a dozen times, lingering over the selection of camera set-ups and admiring the smooth grace of the camera's action. Flaherty can give us a boy casting a line, a man repairing his boat or a stone being split into fragments more superbly than any other director, but his relation of these to the wider theme is a matter open to discussion.

The absence of any artificial narrative is a final justification of the documentary approach to cinema. Here is the living scene as it appeared to Flaherty recreated in terms of living cinema. Its complete success serves to show up the humbug of those epics of the Frozen North and Hot Africa to which we have so often been subjected. In the control of his human material, Flaherty has shown us the value of restraint. His approach is wholly impersonal. What really happens on Aranmore is not his or our concern in this conception. At no moment is there 'acting' in the sense that the word is customarily used. His characters are normal persons doing things which are normal to them. But because of Flaherty's approach this normality has been transmuted into an idyllic work.

Descending to technical details, Goldman has made a solid job of the editing under Flaherty's supervision and Greenwood has written some quite good music which is not well recorded. The dialogue, some of which is in Gaelic, I found unnecessary but not disturbing. Special mention should be made of John Taylor, a recruit from the Empire Market Board Unit, who assisted Flaherty throughout the production.

As this appears, *Man of Aran* will be in the cinemas and, it remains

to be seen what the people will make of it. So far all concerned in its birth and growth, from producing firm to laboratory worker, deserve congratulation; and this does not exclude the publicity which has accompanied the production and exhibition of the film. Its fate, and incidentally that of much unborn documentary, will lie in the purses of the public. P.R.

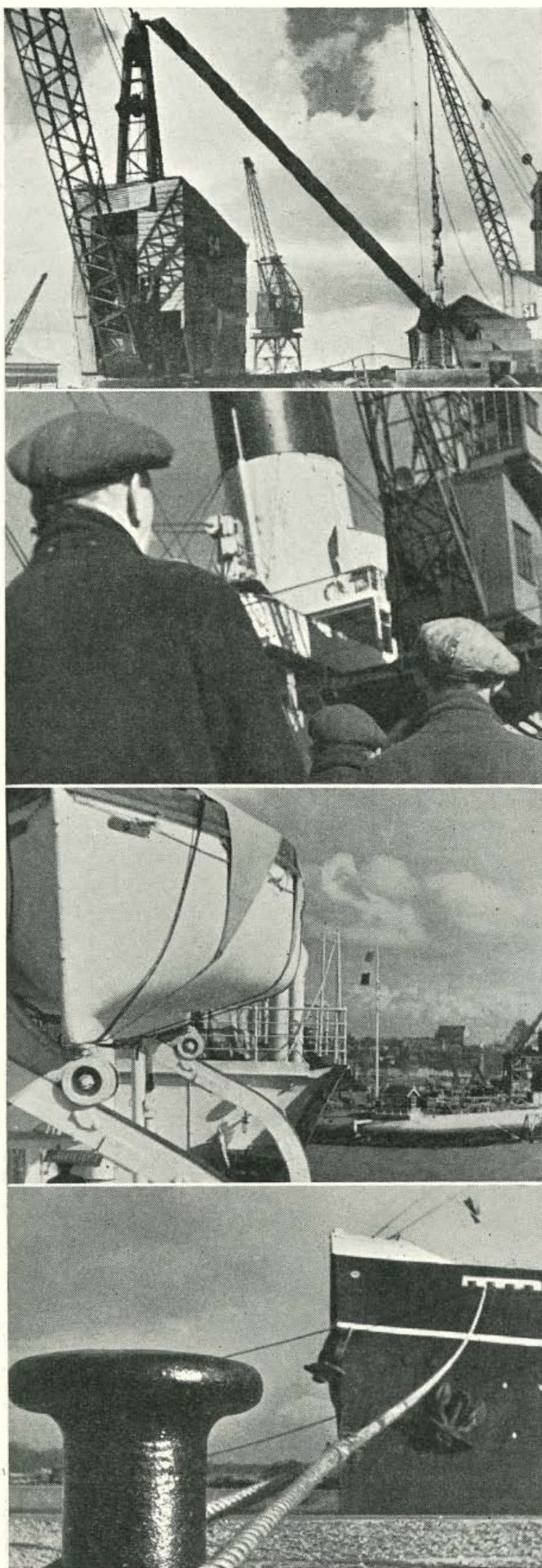
RISING TIDE (British)

Gaumont British Instructional. Direction: Paul Rotha. Photography: G.W. Pocknall, J. Rogers and F. Goodliffe. Music: Clarence Raybould. 35 mm. 3,000 ft.

Rotha's second composition on the subject of modern civilisation and progress was built up from a legacy of newsreel material shot during the construction of the new Southampton graving dock. Taking this incident as a sign of the times he has made what would have been, in another age and another medium, a triumphal ode on the return of prosperity. The documentary film, in the hands of some of our directors, is the modern equivalent; and this picture of ships and cargoes has the symbolism, the poetic approach and the formal shape and rhythm that one expects from a deliberately constructed work of art. With the first bare waste scenes of mudflats to be reclaimed there are shots of unemployed dock workers, groups of young men hopeless and idle; then the beginnings of activity; the clearing of the site and the coming of derricks and cranes and scaffolding. The rhythm quickens as the tide rises; a vast floor is laid and walls of concrete raised against a lovely changing background of clouds and sunlit sky. Last of all, a great steel gate arrives and thousands of tons of water pour in impressive cataracts to fill the completed structure. The dock is ready for the big



Aran Islanders :
Flaherty (G.B.)



RISEING TIDE, by Paul Rotha (G.B. Instructional)

ships: the climax to a grand crescendo which leaves us no doubt that we have seen a really great and exciting achievement.

At this point the action pauses to begin another upward curve; in the second part we are shown in a sequence of pictures, each short but full of light and movement, all the riches of the Empire that come as cargo to the docks; sugar cane and fruit from the tropics; iron, steel and glass from the smoky north. There have been many films of iron smelting, but none quite so vigorous or dramatic as the short scene that follows the lyric sequence of the plantations. The darkness and the leaping glare of the furnace, the movements of the men, their strange headgear and the swift recurring gesture of the shielding arm make of it a kind of infernal ballet, to which Raybould's music provides a modern anvil chorus. The accompaniment, particularly in this second part of *Rising Tide*, collaborates delightfully with the direction and it would be a thousand pities if expense or the dull ear of the average filmgoer puts an end to a partnership that has produced results of such permanent interest. The music is certainly "difficult" in places; it is possibly a little too good for the average ear, since at first hearing it makes demands on the attention that distract from the picture. But at a second hearing the difficulties resolve themselves and afterwards it is hard to remember whether, for instance, the bland and milky impression of the paper pulp machine that follows the furnace shots, or the glossy brittle heat of the glass factory was due to the quality of the music or of the photography.

This pageant of commerce leads up to the triumphant conclusion, the launching of the great *Majestic*, laden with her cargo; and here Rotha has given us some magnificent photography. The immense size of the liner is emphasised by distant glimpses of white decks seen through haze between the dark shapes of foreground ships; piecemeal shots of a gigantic hull, taken from below, and long white lines against the deeper tones of sea and sky; a scene that should delight the eye and rejoice the heart of every type of audience in this country. The workers on the quay again provide the essential reference to the unemployment problem that is the underlying motive of the film; and again there is that exhilarating sense of space and sunshine that is a characteristic of all Rotha's outdoor work. A strongly individual production; but the subject and its compact and dramatic treatment should give it a very much wider public than the enlightened circuit of film societies and specialist theatres. Y.M.R.

LE MILE (French)

Production: Filmtac. Direction: Jean Lod's. Photography: Boris Kauffmann. Sound Montage: E. Kratsch. Music: Martenot. Two reels. 35 mm.

Lods is one of the new group of French documentary directors which has sprung up since the old days of the *avant-garde* of Epstein, Cavalcanti and Clair. In this short film of a champion runner he displays a sound technical equipment and an ability to select a single theme and adhere to it. We open

with the training of the champion Ladoumègue, with skipping and muscle exercises lovely to watch. We follow with a nicely handled scene of massage treatment and lung testing, with some natural and entertaining dialogue. Then a vision of the great race, excitingly done in a manner typically French, with a grand use of slow-motion in sound as well as picture. Finally, we wind up with the actual race itself, as thrilling as you may wish any big race to be. It is all simply shot and brilliantly put together, with a handling of sound that is original and stimulating. Apart from the music, for which Martenot's remarkable machine for obtaining sounds from the ether is used, three natural sounds are employed with considerable imaginative skill: the sound of breathing, of nailed shoes on a cinder track and of the rhythmic cheering reminiscent of American college cheer-leading. Lods has turned these to more creative purpose than nine-tenths of the babel that is rapidly making our population into a race of deafs and demonstrated the importance of selectivity in sound more clearly than any studio-made story film of the sound era. The nature of this subject and its skilful treatment should make *Le Mile* of universal acceptance, especially among school audiences.

P.R.

LA VIE D'UNE FLEUVE (French)

Production: Filmtac. Direction: Jean Lods. Photography: Boris Kauffman. Music: Maurice Jaubert. Two reels. Sound. 35 mm.

After seeing *Le Mile*, Lods's film of the Seine from trickling source to wide mouth is a disappointing as well as a disjointed affair. There is much nice photography and considerable thought behind the shooting, but little has been made of the natural crises in the river's course and without Jaubert's excellent music I am afraid that the picture would be dull indeed. Perhaps the greatest failure is the complete ineffectuality of the river's meeting with the sea—after all the most dramatic event of the whole theme—which Lods has apparently realised but failed to achieve, probably because he was too absorbed in detail and allowed the bigness of the event to escape him in cutting. On the other hand, the picture, as seen, is considerably reduced in length and it is possible that the peak points have suffered in the trimming. One thing is clear, however: that the present school of French documentary has little to give their English *confrères* either in conception or production. Most second-year documentary directors over here could have turned out as good a picture as this and given it a broader reference.

P.R.

EUROPE TODAY, THE PACIFIC PROBLEM, THE MOON, THE SAHARA (French)

Production: Atlantic Films. Supervision: Marcel de Hubsch. Direction: Etienne Lallier. Length of each: 3 minutes. 35mm. Sound. Commentary English.

Here is a grand idea—making a three minute film about any topical subject under the sun. The choice of subject is easy: the production extraordinarily difficult. But these four little films are

brilliantly made and put across a rapid summary of their respective subjects with remarkable efficiency. The idea opens up tremendous possibilities of a tabloid screen newspaper touching on this, that or the other item of current interest. Technically, these pictures reach a standard of trick-work and animated diagram which England has never approached and must have been costly to produce. *Europe To-day* gives a use of animation that is quite new and suggests wide fields to be explored. Personally, no film that I have ever seen has conveyed more vividly the story of the World War as achieved by these animated maps, a feat for which I have the fullest admiration.

P.R.

MASTERSHIP; a Film Sermon (British).

Production: Gee Films. Distribution: Guilds of Light, Religious Film Society. Scenario & direction: Aveling Ginever. Photography: Eric Gross. 2,000 ft.

A very sincere attempt to give practical illustration to the mastership of Christ working among the people of Poplar. One noted particularly the effective contrast of West End lights, East End slums, and English countryside. Judged by current big-film production, the acting and studio sets occasionally lack conviction and the film itself in places gives one an ominous feeling of being about to stop dead in the middle of its argument. Nevertheless, the conception and execution of such a bold idea as a pictorial sermon on a religious theme itself deserves every praise and, as this is the first of a series, no doubt the lessons gained will be incorporated in those which follow.

The really serious criticism of the film is that it accompanies its visual sermon with, at the same time, an aural sermon. The visuals are so well able to stand entirely by themselves that, in places, no audience can at the same time pay attention to the commentary. The result is that a large part of the sermon itself is lost in verbiage but, fortunately, it proves in the end to have been superfluous verbiage as the visuals and the aural overlap considerably. It was a pity that a prayer meeting had to be made the *raison d'être*, for a different speaking technique—involving less, but more pointed, speech—is required to link up the picturised incidents and give spectators time to enjoy the pictures, which were in this case very commendably photographed.

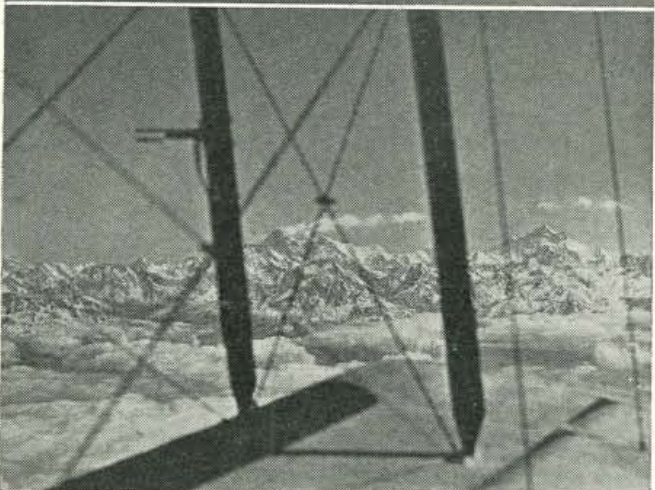
In the opinion of a colleague who is vicar of a suburban church, the type of incidents used to illustrate the argument (dealing with conditions of life in the East End of London), and also the type of the speaking voice (with a distinct Northern burr), will make the film largely unsuitable for use in rural or residential areas and will confine its greater usefulness to industrial parts.

D.F.R.

WINGS OVER EVEREST (British)

Production: Gaumont-British. Direction: Geoffrey Barkas and Ivor Montagu. Photography: Bonnett, Fisher and Rosenthal. 35mm. Music and commentary. Four reels.

Long overdue and at its time of production anxiously anticipated, the record of the Houston-



WINGS OVER EVEREST

G.B.

Everest flight makes interesting general material, although it must be confessed somewhat disappointing in treatment and dramatic quality. For the purpose of clarity, the negative taken on the three separate flights—two over Everest led by Lord Clydesdale and one over Kanchenjunga, led by Air-Commodore Fellowes—has been condensed into a single flight. We are given an insight as to how the idea for the expedition arose, how it came to be financed by Lady Houston (who makes a brief but unforgettable appearance), the building of the machines, the equipping of the personnel, the arrival of the outfit at Karachi and the epic flight itself. Much of the aerial material is impressive, and the cameramen concerned are to be congratulated on their efforts. Intimate shots of the men in the machines staged in the studio are commendably done and inserted well into the authentic material, while the idea of including generous footage of Bonnett wielding his camera and changing magazines is excellent. The English sequence of preparation, on the other hand, lacks the planned construction of good documentary, its style too chatty for conviction. This is accentuated by the "Play up, you chaps!" attitude adopted throughout by most of the persons appearing in the film and stamps the whole picture with that false sincerity associated with the fifth form. The sequence of aeroplane construction is perhaps the best technical job, although it is remarkably similar in places to Elton's *Aero-Engine*. Apart from these weaknesses in general handling, the film makes an acceptable contribution to the ranks of lesser documentary. P.R.

CAVALCADE OF THE MOVIES (American)

Production : A.P.D. Collated by J. Stuart Blackton.
Five reels. Commentary. 35mm.

Dedicated with much pomp to Thomas Edison, this picture attempts to describe the historical and mechanical evolution of cinema from the carved figures of Eros on the columns at the temple of Rameses in 1600 B.C. down to the coming of the mamma-boys and the torch-singers. While containing some highly interesting records, particularly the short excerpts from primitive movies, it can hardly be said to be a valuable contribution to our knowledge of cinema. As might be expected, the parade of events has been assembled with a strong American bias and many interesting excerpts from early European films are essentially lacking—such as the Gaumont colour series, the Italian *Cabiria* and *Quo Vadis* and the English *Delhi Durbar*, to name the most obvious—and no mention at all is made of the important trick films made by Georges Méliès in 1896. Post-war history is scrappily done, more attention being paid to popular favourites than to events of real significance. Stress is laid on *The Big Parade*, but nothing is said of the German golden period, of the French comedy donation, of the rise of documentary, of the discoveries of the Russians, and so on. For what it is, a brief but interesting survey of American movie from a fan-magazine point of view, *Cavalcade of the Movies* has its place but it is a very minor one. P.R.

FILMS AND THE SCHOOL

A SECTION FOR EDUCATIONISTS

THE SCHOOL FILM SOCIETY

ITS ORGANISATION AND FUNCTION

By A. Maxwell Lewis

THE foundation, last November, of the British Film Institute and its active progress since then, have by now probably replaced the Commission on Cultural and Educational Films in the public mind, but the report of the Commission, *The Film in National Life* must always remain a valuable textbook for the progressive educationist.

It contains one sentence of paramount importance to the nation and to the film—"The training of the school-child's taste in cinematography by teaching, interest and entertainment films is the basis of the intelligent audience of the future." (Section 82, page 55).

No teacher will deny the truth of this, but many may ask for guidance in the application of the principle in practice. The Report continues: "The film . . . is a power in the education of the child, in the classroom by the teaching film; in the school hall by films of general interest; and, by special children's exhibitions, in public cinemas. These methods of forming and improving taste are at once *distinct* and *related*." (Section 87, page 59).

Every new development in education in schools must, of necessity, be flexible, to fit local circumstances. Hence there is a danger in the too literal interpretation of the word *distinct* in the paragraph quoted above. The three methods will tend to become entirely separated and the one chosen which circumstances suggest.

After experience of the three, taken separately, I have come to the conclusion that such a separation will yield small result. I consider that the word *related* should be the one to emphasise; and that is not sufficient. The three should be *unified* if the maximum of success is to be secured.

The question therefore arises, how may such unification be created to possess both practicability and flexibility? The answer rests in the formation of a school film society running on lines modified, but similar to those of adult film societies.

The aims of adult societies may be described as follows: To promote an interest in, and understanding of the art of the film; to encourage the study of the technique of film production; and to study the cultural and educational aspects of films.

These aims are realised by lectures, discussions at a study circle, the private exhibition of films to members, (the films usually being grouped to afford illustration of, or to effect comparison between some points of art or technique) and by experience in the manufacture of amateur productions.

I do not intend to give an account of the working of such film society practice, nor to present an

exhaustive description of the running and administration of a school film society, but merely to suggest a suitable organisation and indicate some of the activities that such a society can undertake.

The School Society

The school film society may be divided into two sections; the producing section and the exhibiting section. In these divisions it acts as (a) a hobby club, (b) as a means of training the child in film appreciation, and (c) as a means of assisting in the use of teaching films.

Producing Section

I sub-divide this group according to activity as follows:—

1. Directing staff.
2. Script and story writers.
3. Cameramen.
4. Stage and settings staff.
5. Acting personnel.
6. Editing staff.
7. Liaison group.

It is readily seen that in these seven groups there is an opening for every boy and/or girl, according to personal taste, natural bent and individuality.

In groups 4 and 5 we have opportunity for co-operation with the school dramatic society; in group 3, with the school photographic society. While the existence of these two latter activities is in no way essential to the success of the film society, such co-operation where possible will add strength to all three and should be encouraged.

The directing staff should consist of a responsible master or mistress, who preferably knows something about films; if this knowledge is unavailable at the moment there are some extremely useful books from which information can be obtained which is consolidated by practice and such assistants as may be required. The director will be responsible for the running of the section as a unit and should in the beginning also undertake the editing of the productions. Thus all the remaining groups are under his control.

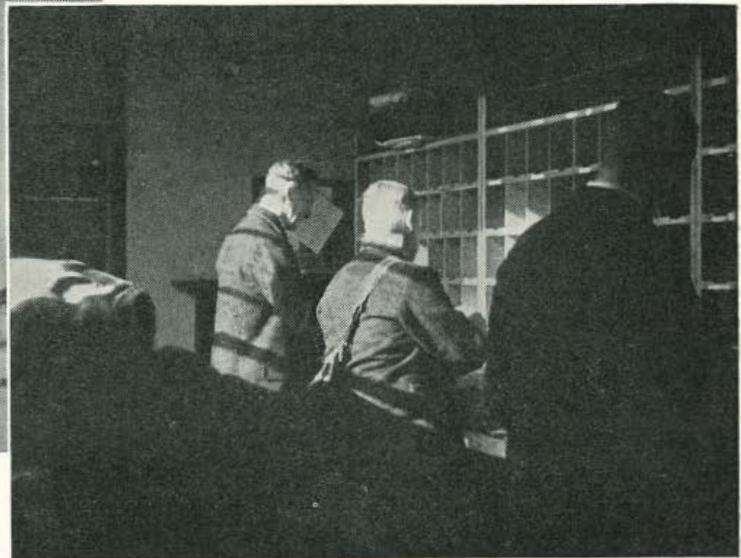
Group 2. There are openings for individualists in this group, which also offers opportunities for the literary minded.

Group 3. Experienced amateur cameramen may already exist in a school to-day when amateur cinematography is a popular hobby. This group will always require some experience before serious work is undertaken. It will naturally be very attractive



Above : TELEPHONE WORKERS G.P.O. Film Unit
Direction : John Grierson and Stuart Legg

Below : METHODS OF COMMUNICATION G.P.O.
Film Unit
Country Sorters. Direction : Grierson and Shaw



and will need skilful handling on the part of the Director.

Groups 4 and 5. Mention has already been made of the co-operation with the school dramatic society. Young actors will show allegiance to group 5 and to a lesser extent group 4, which should attract the mechanically minded.

I have already discussed briefly the editing of productions and as this part of the work is quite as important as the directing and filming, due care should be devoted to it. There remains group 7.

This group may also be called the miscellaneous group. There will always be found some who are difficult to place. As, for success, every member must be given something to do, however small, I have suggested this last group to act as a clearing house for odd jobs. It also serves the useful purpose of a probationary group to which junior members may be attached before graduating to more active and responsible work.

Members should be encouraged to pass from group to group, in order to equalise opportunity for learning all branches of the work of amateur production. This will add to the strength of the section as time passes. With the development of the section senior members will lighten the task of the director, being capable of taking on more responsible activities.

Activities of Production Group

Many school activities occur during the year which provide admirable material for a school news reel, which is the best subject for the young society to undertake. Games, athletic sports, scouts, O.T.C., school festivals, all offer excellent opportunities and films of them have the advantage of (a) topicality, (b) appeal to past and present pupils and parents, (c) forming invaluable documentary records and (d) being easy to produce.

The development of the section and the experience

which accrues to the members will lead to more ambitious undertakings, such as the production of entertainment films.

It should be remembered that every film decided upon should have its story and shooting script composed before any photography is attempted.

Acquisition of Apparatus

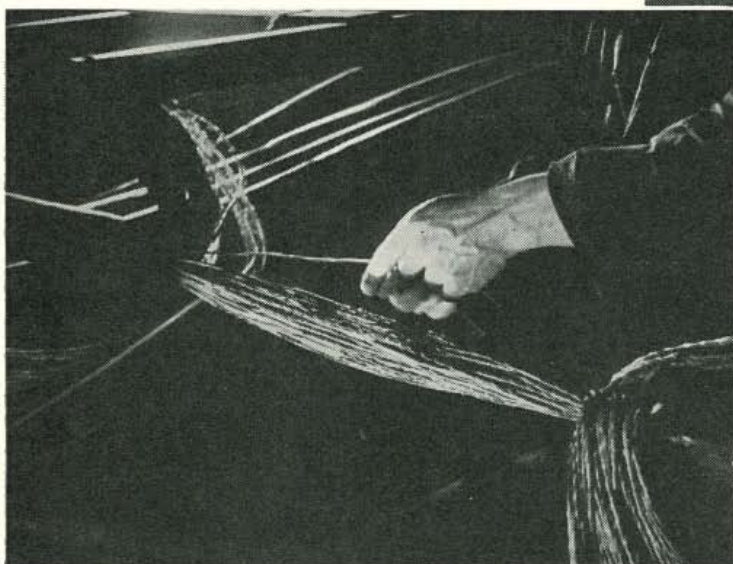
The young society can begin quite well with one-hand camera, although it is not to be denied that a tripod, with panning and titling head, is extremely useful. Additional cameras and tilting equipment will, of course, make the filming much easier and better. Titling apparatus for editing may be made very easily and this should offer little difficulty.

If inside shots are to be made then sets must be constructed and good lighting is necessary. Here a liaison with the dramatic society is imperative. Suitable lighting for film work can again be easily constructed from readily procurable articles.

There are three methods to employ in obtaining the apparatus required by this section of the society. These are, by loan, hire or purchase. In some schools, as mentioned above, pupils may be found who possess apparatus. They will usually be keen members and the apparatus problem is thereby partially solved. Apparatus is almost certainly to be found among parents and old students who will loan it to the school if a guarantee against misuse is provided by a responsible person in charge of the section.

I have left till last a discussion of the size of camera to employ. The size of the camera demands a consideration of which stock to employ. Sub-standard 9.5mm. will have the greatest appeal on account of price. I favour the 16mm. stock myself on the grounds of greater utility and on the fact that 16mm. cameras which will permit of the employment of some of the finer points of cinematography are cheaper to purchase than cameras which permit

Below : UNDERGROUND CABLES G.P.O. Film Unit
 Direction : Grierson and Shaw



Above : TELEPHONE WORKERS G.P.O. Film Unit
 Direction : John Grierson and Stuart Legg

of the same in the 9.5mm. size. I recommend the use of negative film and not reversible stock. More than one positive may then be obtained, which will be invaluable in that they may be loaned to other school societies for exhibition.

Exhibiting Section

In the passage quoted above from *The Film in National Life* film exhibitions are mentioned 'in the school hall' and 'in the public cinema.' Both of these concern the exhibiting section.

Teachers will recognise that the power of a school activity depends upon its being an internal activity. Hence the former of these two alternatives should be chosen if possible. If on account of local circumstances a school sub-standard projector is an impossibility, then the latter alternative must be accepted. But the exhibitions in a public cinema should come as an activity of the school film society and not as an isolated function with an 'outside' air. I believe that both exhibitions in the school hall and in the public cinema should form part of the activities of this section of the society. In this case the school film society will have exhibitions of its own films made by the producing section, exhibitions of silent films of merit in the formation of taste or in film appreciation in the school hall and exhibitions of chosen talkies in the local cinema. I have at the moment of writing just completed the final work resulting from an exhibition at a local cinema of two chosen films. I had an audience of over three hundred boys and the exhibition was held in school time. I am also indebted to the manager of the cinema for considerable assistance with the exhibition.

The ideal from the 'internal' viewpoint is a number of small silent sub-standard projectors for general school use and a sub-standard talkie apparatus for the school hall. In this case both silent and sound films may be shown.

The members of the exhibiting section of the society will naturally be almost entirely the members of the producing section. The society has been divided to illustrate activity only.

Lectures and Discussions

These are an essential part of the society's activities and affect both sections equally. Lectures should be arranged on points of film art and the technique of production in order that the children will understand films and will be able to appreciate the good and deprecate the bad in the films which they will see outside the society. They should not be given the impression that the school film society is to replace visits to the public cinema in their private life, but that it is to make their enjoyment of these visits more complete. In this way the ideal of "the intelligent audience of the future" will be realised. Discussions should follow lectures or the showing of films by the society and perhaps most important of all, private visits to the cinema. Children will be encouraged to hold intelligent opinions of their own and to preserve them and defend them in argument. Lectures and discussions on the technique of film production will be of great use in the activities of the producing section and result in the improvement of the "home product."

Finance

In all school societies this is a matter of first importance. Funds may be raised for the purchase of apparatus and the renting of films by :—

1. Members' subscriptions. If there are any pupils who wish definitely to join only one or the other of the two sections those joining the producing section only should pay a higher subscription than those who join the exhibiting section.
2. Loans from a school fund or private means.
3. Gifts.
4. Profits from exhibitions.

The last of these methods provides a way of finding funds to start the society. An exhibition is arranged by the school in co-operation with the manager of the local cinema to take place in the local cinema. The school guarantees a given number, say two hundred and fifty, any additional tickets sold may be shared by the school and the cinema. If the price of admission is sevenpence, the cinema and school may share each on the basis of fourpence (including the penny tax stamp) and threepence respectively. This will provide a fund on which the school film society can begin active internal work. I emphasise my opinion that before the exhibitions begin the society should be formed. Lectures and discussions prepare the way for profitable results both financially and aesthetically.

Many schools have already begun such work as I have here described. This will not be new to them but will probably provide material for stimulating criticism which will be welcomed. Some schools have been searching for information on which to begin such work. I hope that these suggestions will be of use to them. Other schools have as yet made no start in this direction. I trust that I have been able to provide them with food for thought.

EDUCATIONAL FILMS IN SWEDEN

The A.B. Svensk Filmindustri of Stockholm formed in the autumn of 1921 a department for the handling of films specially adapted for use in schools. It began with about 500 carefully selected films and now there are over 2,700 films on the shelves of the stockrooms.

The films are selected with due regard to the demands and curriculum of Swedish educational institutions—particularly of the public primary schools—and come from all educational film-producing countries in Europe and to a certain extent also from the U.S.A., although, naturally, the greater part consists of the production of Svensk Filmindustri (represented by over a thousand odd films).

The public schools represent the greater part of the attendances at film lessons, but there are also elementary and high schools of different types, lecturers, social and church institutions, hospitals, societies and so on. Educational films are now being shown in roughly 1,500 centres all over the country.

The film and apparatus used in the schools is exclusively of the standard type and mostly silent. The educational institutions of Sweden have, with a few exceptions, found no use for the 16mm. size and there is only a limited supply of sub-standard educational material available in Sweden. Some educational institutions, however, have been enabled to instal sound-projectors and consequently have access to the general sound film productions. Actual classroom film lessons are still only possible in a few fortunate cases. The bigger towns have been able to arrange something similar to classroom tuition by grouping pupils of the same ages and giving them a film lesson in the school hall or other suitable locality; occasionally the local cinema-house has been rented for this purpose. Certain provinces have solved the problem by touring a certain district with a mutually owned projector, a committee of teachers having selected a suitable programme. In some parts of the country these circuits are covering some hundred and more schools.

As a rule expenses are defrayed by a small grant from the educational authorities. In some cases the pupils themselves pay an entrance-fee and in others the children's expenses are covered by giving public performances where the grown-ups pay an entrance fee.

EDUCATION AND CINEMA

At its annual conference held in Buxton the National Association of Head Teachers passed a resolution urging a more progressive attitude on the part of local education authorities towards the introduction of films, broadcasting and other modern aids to learning in schools. Miss E. Hollings, who proposed the resolution, said that the cinema and broadcasting, used intelligently, could be both satisfying and enriching to their public.

* *

The L.C.C. Education Committee has issued a report on a recommendation of the school managers that, as the General Post Office has now acquired the films library of the late Empire Marketing Board, the Council be requested to take steps to obtain on loan or otherwise the use of certain films suitable for education purposes.

The Committee is not prepared to recommend this step to the Council at present. The report states that the question of the use of cinematography in schools has been under consideration from time to time, but up to the present the general principle of the provision of apparatus has not been approved by the Council. The type of apparatus on the market and the supply of instructional films, which is very restricted at present are, however, continually under review. There are a few schools which have projectors, but the supply of films is left entirely to the head teachers, who are aware of the existence of the G.P.O. Library. Until the position in regard to apparatus and the supply of educational films has developed, the Committee does not think that there is anything that can be usefully done in the matter.

* *

Aniakchak, a film of the volcanos of Alaska, made by Father B. Hubbard, the geologist, has been added to Western Electric road show library for use in schools and clubs. The film includes scenes of Eskimo life and close-up views of the crater; for stills see SIGHT AND SOUND, Volume 2, p. 25.

* *

Following the announcement that **Climbing Mount Everest**, the record of the 1933 Everest Expedition, is available to schools through the Western Electric Road Service, many enquiries have been made for this film. It should be noted that if groups of schools or education authorities could co-operate and arrange for showings to take place in their districts under the co-ordinated scheme, the cost of individual exhibitions would be materially reduced. The elementary and secondary schools under the Oxford education authorities have seen the advantages of this plan and are arranging for a series of shows covering a period of two or three weeks. Two or three shows each day are being given in neighbouring schools which are arranging the date and times of shows accordingly. If schools in other parts of the country could see their way to make similar arrangements, the Western Electric Road Show agents will be ready and willing to make considerable reductions in their charges. Given a maximum of such co-ordination the cost for schools can be brought down to as small a fee as £2, which includes not only the talking picture but also the portable sound film reproducing equipment and service of operators.

* *

A cinema hall with apparatus for showing sound films will be included in the equipment of the new elementary school which is being built at a cost of £20,000 in Farnborough Road, Birkdale, Southport. Educational films will be shown weekly as part of the school curriculum.

* *

Nearly 800 boys and girls who are leaving school at the end of this term attended an exhibition of industrial films held recently at West Bromwich. The programme was arranged by the local education committee as part of its scheme for vocational training.

* *

The Grammar School at Leeds is now regularly using films during lessons. A large number of schools in Yorkshire are equipped with projectors.

CLASSROOM FILMS

Reviewed by F. Wilkinson,
Wallasey Grammar School

G.B. INSTRUCTIONAL'S PROGRAMME

THE THISTLE. 970 ft. Directed by Percy Smith; edited by Mary Field.

KITCHENCRAFT: HOW TO MAKE A PORK PIE. 660 ft. Directed by Ronald Haines, approved National School of Cookery.

BREATHING. 1088 ft. Directed by Donald Carter, supervised by Professor W. Cullis, C.B.E. Produced in collaboration with London School of Medicine for Women.

THE WHEATLANDS OF EAST ANGLIA. 2 reels. 1712 ft. Directed by Mary Field. Maps supplied by Messrs. G. Philip and Son, Limited.

THE FRENCH 'U.' 476 ft. Directed by Mary Field.

ROOTS. 1135 ft. Produced by Percy Smith, edited by Mary Field. Supervised by Professor F. Salisbury, F.R.S.

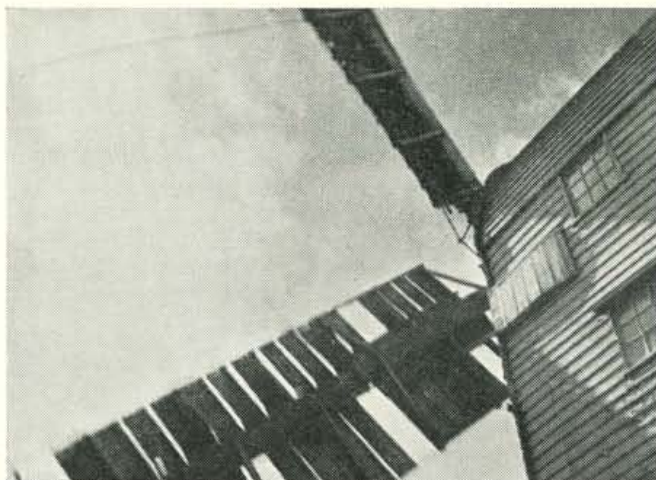
SHAKESPEARE. 1064 ft. Directed by John B. Holmes, supervised by Dr. G. Harrison.

(All 35mm. and 16mm. sound films. Footage given for 35mm.)

Most of the audience present on June 21st, when this programme was presented at the Academy Theatre, London, seemed impressed by the fact that the occasion was one of more than ordinary importance, for although there is already an extensive library of films collected from many sources, from which teachers can draw to aid them in their lessons, hardly any of these films fulfil all or even most of the requirements of the educational film. But these new films of G.B. Instructional Ltd. claim to be *ad hoc* educational films and therefore the real thing at last.

For such a claim there is indeed plenty of justification. In the first place these films were the product of a firm which aims at a policy of giving the teachers what they want, and in the making of them there had been no other end in view than use in the classroom. The examples shown were only the first of a series intended to cover the curricula of every type of educational institute and ultimately all subjects are to be served. The method of production adopted by G.B. Instructional is to call in a practising teacher of established reputation to work in collaboration with their technical experts, and it must be admitted that such an arrangement seems to justify itself, the teacher contributing the scenario and supervising the direction, while the technicians supply the means of interpreting his ideas to the screen. It is small wonder that the audience were impressed, for actually they were receiving the first formidable challenge that the educational film is no longer a plaything for the few, but a medium of teaching which cannot be ignored by any discriminating teacher.

The first film shown came under the category of Natural Science and dealt with the life history of the spear thistle. From every point of view it



WHEATFIELDS OF EAST ANGLIA, by Mary Field (G.B.I.)

seemed to justify its purpose. It was a complete history of the habits of one plant, yet it left much for both the teacher and the class to do. It could be used to illustrate many types of lesson and at the same time it could be shewn as a cultural film to demonstrate the wonder and infinite wisdom of nature generally.

The next film gave a comprehensive lesson in the making of a pork pie. Here the most apparent characteristic was that it was entirely to the point; each fact being given its separate and integral value and its right emphasis. The commentary supplemented the action, which is the right principle, while the tempo was deliberate and measured, so that the class could watch, listen and either figuratively or actually make a pork pie all at the same time. Moreover, in addition to fulfilling its utilitarian purpose this film had balance, shape and its own inherent beauty. An educational film, whatever its subject matter, ought always to be a work of art; and here the director had managed to infuse into plain statement of plain fact a great deal of the authentic delight to be obtained from ordinary materials responding to the genius of a craftsman.

Following this came an attempt to teach the operation of breathing. It began with a somewhat laboured exposition of the process of burning, tracing each factor step by step and finally correlating them with the human body. Good use was made of working diagrams. A teaching film, to be effective, should be short, and this film seemed long, probably owing to the director endeavouring to pack into it too many facts. If such a film becomes too obvious in its technique and if it strains too much to drive home its points it will more definitely fail than a similarly offending teacher, because the teacher can always adapt at will his matter and method to suit the mood of his class, whereas the faults of a film are inexorably fixed.

The next film, on wheatlands in East Anglia, was perhaps from all points of view the most perfect. This may have been partly due to the adaptability of geography to cinematographic representation. The theme was simple and the matter direct. Maps and moving diagrams were included just when they were needed and expected. Again there was apparent the much greater force of a teaching film when it is also a work of art.

Language films supervised and acted in by Monsieur Stéphan are now well known. The one shown here on the French vowel sound 'u' is one of the most effective of the series. It is cleverly conceived, being timed to enable the audience to take part in the lesson and it was unfortunate that the otherwise highly intelligent audience at the Academy failed to rise to the occasion. The film will be popular.

Another film dealing with Natural Science followed, called *Roots*. No other method of exposition can possibly attain the effectiveness of the film in this realm of knowledge. In fact, much of what was seen can only be apprehended by means of the film. When teachers are asked what they particularly

want from the film, their reply is often that they want it to save them time so that they can more successfully complete the syllabus. In this film on roots the work of weeks can be as efficiently covered in a few minutes and students of all ages will get from this particular film what no other medium, not even personal observation can give them, for here the purposive urge that is behind life was convincingly revealed. Ordinary teaching film though it might be, it succeeded in arousing as well that emotion which is essential to all creative thought and springs from a sense of wonder at the mingled simplicity and complexity of nature. The micro-photography in *Roots* is a definite contribution to science.

At the end came a new departure, a film entitled *Shakespeare*, and the audience can be pardoned for feeling alarmed at the prospect. It began badly with an incongruous and quite irrelevant joke, which, it is to be hoped, no modern school-child will be able to appreciate. Then followed a series of exquisitely chosen shots illustrating lines from the poet's work, the intention being to show that Shakespeare was a real person, endeavouring to describe real things. How often are teachers confronted with the problem of interpreting the imagery of a poet to a class of insufficiently developed imagination? The film now comes promisingly to their rescue and after witnessing the vision of Avon which inspired the lines describing Ophelia's death no one need question the potentiality of the film to supplement the study of literature.

These films can be hired immediately from G.B. Instructional, with teachers' notes on each. In addition to these notes, G.B. might consider the issue of similar pamphlets for scholars, more fully illustrated with stills of the principal shots and containing all the diagrams and caption matter.

The mind memorises mainly by means of words and notes issued for pupils containing key illustrations would be a great help to the necessary transportation into words of the fact conveyed.

The next action is on the part of the teachers, for the future of these films and of their successors depends upon the extent of their use. Mr. Ramsbotham might not have been very encouraging about the provision of projectors from public funds, but teachers have been accustomed to circumventing official parsimony. The real educational film exists at last. Let those whose business is teaching now get on with the task of fitting it into its right place in education.

(Note: The quotations which are illustrated by the scenes from John Holmes' *Shakespeare* on the opposite page will be easily identified: the first, "proud-pied April dressed in all his trim"; below the portrait is Falstaff's likeness, "a tun of man"; and at the foot Henry V's exhortation to his army, "I see you stand like greyhounds in the slips.")

Paul Rotha writes of this film: "It is the commentary, both in conception and delivery, which calls for particular comment; for this intermingling of voices breaks fresh ground which may yield interesting results . . . In forthcoming issues the director might perhaps find it worth while to play with the infinite possibilities of poetic imagery in which he may find the link between symbolic illustration and spoken quotation for which he is obviously searching.")

BOOKS TO READ

HOW TO APPRECIATE MOTION PICTURES*

Reviewed by Paul Rotha

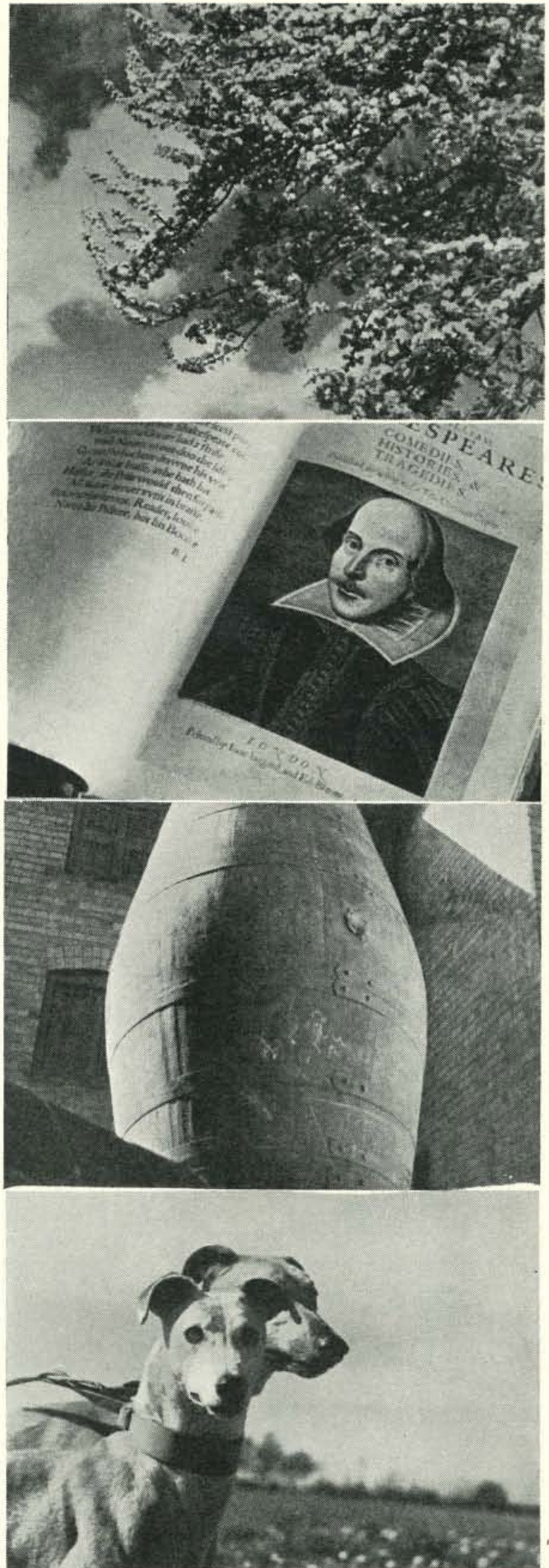
IT is worthwhile mentioning how this book came into being. In spring, 1929, the Payne Fund of New York made available money for the scientific study of the effect of films on youth. These studies were made by the Committee on Educational Research of the Payne Fund at the request of the National Committee for Study of Social Values in Motion Pictures, now the Motion Picture Research Council. The author of this book, Mr. Edgar Dale, was given the task of collecting information and making suggestions for a programme to develop higher standards of taste in films among high-school students, an aim with which anyone at all interested in the welfare of cinema must agree.

Let me say outright that Mr. Dale has undertaken his job with an honest conscience and that if all his findings do not meet with our approval, it is not to suggest that his work is without value. Just as perhaps no one can appreciate better the extreme difficulties of his task than myself, so also any criticisms which I may offer are based more on personal experience of a similar analysis than on discounting the value of Mr. Dale's endeavour.

There are, then, three main points on which I take exception to Mr. Dale's approach to his problem of teaching appreciation of cinema. Firstly, his obsession for informing his readers of the technical aspects of film production. Secondly, his failure to make the most essential distinction between story-film and documentary. And thirdly, most important of all, his complete avoidance of revealing the fundamental reasons why films are as they are and why, in fact, he finds it necessary at all to instruct high-school students as to what films they should go and see.

As the result of his investigations, Mr. Dale makes eight suggested changes in methods of film production which he believes would bring about improvement in the present product. They are worth listing. First, he advocates that the number of films made annually should be fewer and that their playing time should be twice as long. Second, that films should be made for more than one kind of audience and that there should be an increase in the number of pictures which deal with serious problems of life. Third, that properly organised training schools for film workers are badly needed. Fourth, that the star-system with its intensive publicity for building 'fan' audiences should be thrown overboard. Fifth, that films must be produced not necessarily for personal profit but to fit the needs of the people. Sixth, development among amateur groups must be encouraged. Seventh, cycles in

* HOW TO APPRECIATE MOTION PICTURES: a manual of motion-picture criticism prepared for high-school students. Edgar Dale. Macmillan. 1933.



SHAKESPEARE, by John B. Holmes (G.B.I.)



Cedric Hardwicke and Pamela Ostrer in a scene from *JEW SUSS*, in which Conrad Veidt plays the lead, (G.B.)

film subjects must be eliminated. And eighth, that the film trade needs more experimentation to keep it from going stale.

Now each of these eight recommendations has been made times without number long before Mr Dale thought of them and nothing has resulted. Moreover, there are many of us who are convinced that no matter how many wise recommendations may be made, nothing is likely to happen. And this is where I admonish Mr. Dale for not having taken his courage in both hands and given the reasons why his suggestions are never likely to be adopted. He neglects to tell us that film producers will not and cannot adopt his advice under the present social, political and economic system; that films to-day are produced under an ideology which prevents their being anything else than what they are. Had Mr. Dale instilled this one vital fact into the minds of his high-school readers he would have performed a most valuable achievement. The systematic organisation of specialist audiences and the spreading dissatisfaction among film-goers may eventually make the production of so-called 'artistic' films less speculative than it is now, but such pictures

will remain at their best mere examples of craftsmanship and will never be permitted to make a truthful approach to the serious sociological problems with which society is confronted to-day.

As it stands, and to return to my earlier contentions, most of this book is taken up with a detailed account of the technical side of production, a knowledge of which in my opinion is immaterial to a general appreciation of cinema. In place of teaching his students naive generalisations about acting, lighting, settings and dialogue (about which technicians themselves are undecided) and quoting rather dubious examples from second and third-rate pictures, he might have been wiser to have talked more of themes, for that, after all is what the audience looks for in any film. He might also have dealt at some length with the importance of the director's approach to his subject, although I confess to alarm when I read of "Eisenstein's genius in developing scenes of great pictorial beauty" and that Herbert Brenon does whimsical and fantastic things well.

SECRETS OF NATURE (Faber, 12s. 6d.) by Mary Field and Percy Smith, will be reviewed in our next issue.

INFRA-RED PHOTOGRAPHY, by S. O. Rawlings, D.Sc., F.I.C., F.R.P.S. (Blackie, 3s. 6d.)

This small book should definitely find a place on the bookshelf of every cameraman and technician engaged in cine-photography. It is concise, explanatory and easily understood by beginners in the science of light and colour.

There is a particularly comprehensive section dealing with materials available for infra-red photography and cine-photography, which contains an interesting description of the care necessary in the choice of wrapping materials, camera dark slides, bodies and so on. Many of the substances which the photographer has hitherto regarded as opaque and impervious to light can no longer be considered as light proof when dealing with wavelengths extending to the infra-red portion of the spectrum.

In chapter 3 the author has gone to some length in explaining the difficulties met with in focussing, owing to the fact that the infra-red sensations are beyond the visual spectrum; this chapter, where it deals with the application of infra-red photography, is perhaps the most interesting of the whole book. The results obtainable are amazing; photographs are possible, for instance, in what one would call darkness, the image so obtained being recorded by heat radiators, without any visible illumination whatever.

The author describes experiments carried out with regard to light penetration by infra-red waves, leading up to his final result by a series of simple and easily understood examples. The illustrations and graphs are excellent and help to make doubly plain a subject which can no longer be regarded as one of the greater mysteries of photography. Altogether an extremely valuable little book. G.W.P.

FILMCRAFT, by Adrian Brunel. (Newnes, 3s. 6d.)

Implied in Mr. Brunel's amusing and unpretentious guide to better home movies is so devastating a comment on the whole business of film-making that one hesitates to recommend it to idealists, or, in fact, to any of our readers who have formulated theories on the art of the cinema. Briefly, Mr. Brunel appears to have arrived at the conclusion that cinematography is not an art; it is too costly, mechanical and complex a vehicle for the creative effort of an artist, and the best that can be put into it is good honest craftsmanship which contents itself with saleability and technical competence.

Not that so pessimistic a view is openly expressed in *Filmcraft*; and, in fact, Mr. Brunel betrays an honest appreciation of what we consider to be the artistic masterpieces of the screen; but practical experience has disillusioned him. "I am not a highbrow," he says on page 70. "I may at one time have been guilty of showing my deep interest in films, but I am older and wiser now," and a footnote on page 184 suggests that the word "art" should be abolished from our language in favour of "artfulness."

When one has absorbed the headings of this guide (which was written for the encouragement of amateur production) the significance of that "older and wiser" becomes apparent. There are, to take a few considerations only, the scenario drafts, the eight camera distances, the six pages of technical terminology, not to mention the glossary, which must have given Mr. Brunel great satisfaction; the shooting script; the costing; the casting; the fourteen essential members of the production unit and their several jobs; the cheating; the tracking; the bin-stick; the moviola, and the multiplicity of notebooks and of conferences, all of which, and many other matters, are apparently vital to the creation of a modern commercial talkie. Thus, by taking a strictly repressive standpoint, Mr. Brunel contrives to perform a double service for the art which he seems to deny; under cover of giving a practical lesson in film-making he demonstrates to his professional colleagues the unnecessary clumsiness of the machine they have built up for themselves; and makes it equally clear to the amateur that no film, however simple in scope, was ever worth making without a considerable amount of planning on paper beforehand.

The future of the film does not lie, Mr. Brunel thinks, in additional technical refinements; much the same problems confront the amateur director with his silent substandard camera as those which the fully equipped professional has to deal with, and one is as likely as the other to produce a

masterpiece. "In fact," he says in his preface, "I am always hoping that one of these days some genius will arise from the ranks of the amateur film-makers and produce a silent film that will knock us all flat." In order to "help such a potential genius to feel his feet" detailed shooting scripts of sequences from a silent and from a dialogue film are included; and a series of appendices, of the greatest interest to the lay critic as well as to the amateur producer, by the men on the job: Ian Dalrymple, of G.B. and Gainsborough, on commercial cutting; Sergei Nolbandov on costing productions; a severely practical paper on "Creation," by Ivor Montagu; an amusing one on scenario writing by Angus MacPhail; Henry Harris on lighting; Frank Wells on art direction; John Orton, who made *Windjammer*, on direction; T. L. Rich, unit production manager of Gainsborough Pictures, on production management; Michael Hankinson, of British and Dominions Film Corporation, on the routine of editing; a very valuable four pages on sub-standard editing by Reginald Beck, who edits 16 mm. films professionally; and a note on the duties of the hard-worked assistant director by Roy Lockwood, who made the 16 mm. film *Counterpoint* at Oxford in 1930.

The net result of so much professional information in so compact a shape is distinctly stimulating; not only to amateur film-making but to the growing interest of the public in the possibilities of the ordinary commercial film. Y.M.R.

LETTERS TO THE EDITOR

FAIRY TALES ON THE SCREEN

Dear Sir,—I have been encouraged to write to you after reading a paragraph in *The Listener*. It seems to me that before all the fairy tales and nursery rhymes have been hopelessly and vulgarly travestied in the series known, I believe, as *Silly Symphonies*, somebody should attempt to explore this field in a more worthy fashion. The fairy tales of Grimm and Hans Andersen would make wonderful films to be included in any ordinary programme for the benefit of grown-ups as well as of children. Anyone who has seen Humperdinck's *Hansel and Gretel* acted and sung at Covent Garden has some idea of the possibilities and I should imagine that there are scores of such fairy tales which would lend themselves to film making. The modern methods used in the *Silly Symphonies* and in the *Mickey Mouse* series could be utilised, and I think I am only one of many who would be delighted to see the old fairy stories presented faithfully and beautifully without distortion or vulgarity.

With all good wishes for the success of your magazine.

I am, yours truly,
Catherine Adam, London, N.W.6.

THE BLIMPLESS CAMERA

Dear Sir,—I have the greatest regard for Mr. William Vinten, as well as for the products of his firm, his camera being, to my mind, about the finest "blimp" model camera yet available, but in answer to his letter published in the last issue of *SIGHT AND SOUND* I feel that I must stick to my opinion that the ultimate design for talkie cameras will be a blimpless one. The question of weight does not, I think, enter into the controversy; all designs must find their ultimate correct state by experiment and use. Once the assumed perfect "blimpless" camera arrives, its makers, or their competitors, will strive to produce a lighter and better one every time they charge their model; just as Mr. Vinten's latest blimp for his camera cannot be compared with his original one, from the point of view of weight.

Mr. Vinten states in his letter that "sound proofing, to be effective, must have mass." Here again I do not agree; the finest "sound-proofing" is a vacuum and a vacuum has neither mass nor weight.

In further support of my contention that the camera of the future will be "blimpless" I should like to point out that there are already in existence three "blimpless" machines, one not particularly successful, the other two exceedingly so, and I for one hope in the future to see a talkie camera requiring no blimp produced under the name of Vinten.

Yours truly,
G. W. Pocknall.

WHAT THE BRITISH FILM INSTITUTE IS DOING

WORK OF THE QUARTER

THE inaugural dinner of the Institute was held at the Mayfair Hotel on May 9th when His Grace the Duke of Sutherland, K.T., presided. Among the guests present were the Marchese Paulucci di Calboli Barone, the President of the Italian Instituto Nazionale Luce, Mr. Carl E. Millikan, Vice-President of the Motion Picture Producers and Distributors of America, Mr. C. M. Koon (U.S.A.), Sir Ralph and Lady Glyn, Sir Cecil Levita and Sir Archibald Sinclair, M.P. A message was read from Dr. Luciano de Feo, the Director of the International Institute of Educational Cinematography at Rome who was unable to be present on account of ill-health. He spoke highly of the work of the British Film Institute and expressed his belief that it would find increasing scope for its activities. The Duke of Sutherland referred to the extended use of the film in the school, and Sir Archibald Sinclair, proposing the toast of "The Institute" emphasised the work it could do in promoting mutual understanding between Britain and the Dominions, and between ourselves and foreign countries. Colonel John Buchan, M.P., who gave the health of "The Guests," pointed out that the Institute included representatives not only of cinema and cultural interests, but also of "that great reservoir of good taste and good feeling which we call the general public."

In the morning of the same day an international exhibition of instructional films was given at the Polytechnic Theatre. The attendance was largely made up of representatives of educational and other associations interested in the development of the cinematography for non-theatrical purposes.

The Advisory Council and Its Panels

During the quarter considerable work has been done by the panels created from the membership of the Institute's Advisory Council. The following statement briefly indicates the activities in which they are now engaged:—

The Educational Panel is obtaining the services of recognised experts to assist in the production of educational films, and is securing opinions of experimenters with a view to stimulating the use of the film. It is endeavouring to determine the respective values of "silent" and "sound" films for the classroom and is drawing up a list of scholastic establishments using the film.

An important task before the Panel is the compilation of a complete catalogue of educational films which will not only embody the opinions of viewers, but contain also the practical opinions of teachers and others who have used them.

Four sub-committees have been constituted under the Education Panel to deal specifically with (a) Science, (b) Geography, (c) History and Art, (d) Language and Literature.

The Entertainment Panel is concerning itself with such matters as the following:—

- (1) Securing opinions from the public as to the type of film required.
- (2) The setting up of machinery whereby these opinions would become available to film producers.

- (3) Special films and programmes for children's performances.
- (4) Encouragement to the Repertory Theatre Movement.
- (5) Methods to be adopted whereby public support may be given to films containing some unusual merit, which do not obtain appreciation from the ordinary cinema-going public.

The International Relations Panel is considering means of establishing machinery whereby films showing national characteristics can be freely circulated between Great Britain and other countries. The Panel will examine foreign films with a view to considering their adaptation for use in this country, and it has also put forward the proposal that an annual exhibition of British and international educational films should be arranged under the auspices of the Institute.

The India, Dominions and Colonies Panel is considering the possibility of conducting experiments in selected Colonies to ascertain the psychological effects of different types of film. The Panel is establishing contact with the territorial Governments with a view to developing the educational and cultural film in their respective areas.

The Social Service Panel is examining the particular needs of various social organisations and also such bodies as unemployed welfare centres, the army, navy, mercantile marine and hospitals of special kinds.

The Medical Panel is collecting information as to what medical films are in existence. It has already examined a large number and will ultimately be prepared to recommend the production of further films covering medical subjects not touched by the existing material. The panel is also collaborating in the compilation of a cine-medical encyclopaedia under the auspices of the International Institute of Educational Cinematography.

The Scientific Research Panel is considering:—

- (a) the assistance that can be afforded to persons wishing to take cinematograph records of their work and experiments, but who do not possess adequate facilities for so doing.
- (b) the demonstration of the useful part the cinematograph can play in the advancement of scientific knowledge.

The panel is collecting information with regard to the extent the film has been used by scientific research workers with a view to encouraging the use of the film in this field.

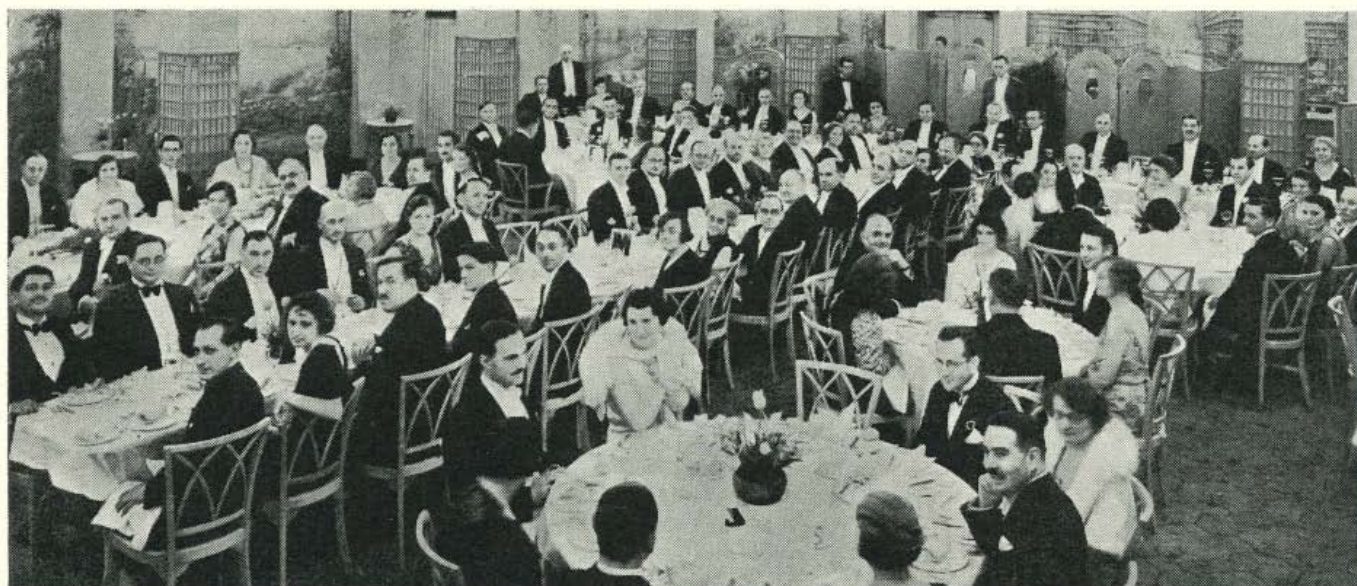
The Library Service Panel is considering to what extent the film can encourage reading; in this connection it is considering the possibility of collaborating with Librarians in experiments on the lines of that conducted by Marylebone Public Library, and collating the results of investigations with a view to publishing reports and carrying out recommendations.

The Amateur Cinematography Panel is discussing the possible collaboration of amateurs in production, the establishment of machinery whereby the films already made might be utilised, and exploring the possibilities of employing the services of amateurs in connection with the making of scientific and other films requiring protracted camera work.

The Documentary Film Panel will co-ordinate the whole field, making contact with all firms producing documentary, educational and instructional films, and by acting as a central consultative body, ensure that duplication of production does not occur.

Exhibition of Educational Sound Films

On June 21st an exhibition of educational sound films produced by Messrs. Gaumont-British In-



At the inaugural dinner of the British Film Institute on May 9th, with His Grace the Duke of Sutherland, K.T., in the chair

structional Ltd., was held under the auspices of the Institute at the Academy Cinema, Oxford Street. The demonstration was the first of a series which the Institute has organised at the following centres:—Brighton, Bristol, Cardiff, Manchester, Liverpool, Glasgow, Newcastle, Bradford and Birmingham. Details of the programme and the address delivered on this occasion by Mr. H. Ramsbotham, M.P., Parliamentary Secretary to the Board of Education, appears elsewhere in *SIGHT AND SOUND*.

At the request of Gaumont-British Instructional Ltd., the Institute has been nominating experts to advise the company upon the production of a series of educational films for the classroom, which includes a group of films designed to interpret the new Board of Education syllabus of physical education for schools.

Technical

The Institute soon after its establishment remitted two important questions for consideration to the British Kinematograph Society (the body concerned with technical aspects of the industry). The first was the problem of the standardization of sub-standard film and apparatus. The second was the problem of storage and preservation of films upon which depends the possibility of forming a repository of films of permanent value. Reports on both these matters are given in the technical section of this issue.

At the annual Conference of the Association of Education Committees held at Cardiff on June 13th to 15th, Mr. A. C. Cameron gave a short address on educational films and on the work of the British Film Institute. A programme of educational films was shown, including *Climbing Mount Everest*, on Western Electric equipment.

Mr. R. S. Lambert will address the meeting of the Chichester Diocesan School at Chichester on July 18th on the work of the British Film Institute.

NEWS FROM FILM SOCIETIES

MERSEYSIDE FILM INSTITUTE SOCIETY, 5 and 6 Bluecoat Chambers, Liverpool, 1.

The Merseyside Film Institute Society's report, presented at its annual meeting in June, states that since the Society's inauguration in May, 1933, 967 members have been enrolled. Eleven societies have been affiliated as associate members. Twelve monthly bulletins, each giving a selected list of recommendations from local programmes, have been issued to members. At the April film show the Society presented *The Captain of Koepenick*; Fischinger's *Hungarian Dance*; *Magic Myxies* (a *Secrets of Nature* film), Zuyder Zee and Disney's *Flowers and Trees*. In response to requests from the Rialto and the Trocadero (Gaumont-British theatres) circulars were sent to members drawing their attention to *Man of Aran* and *The Wandering Jew*. *Hunted People* was shown on the members' night at the Prince of Wales Theatre. An office has been secured in the Bluecoat Chambers and immediate use of the rooms has been made for discussion on film topics and the showing of small-size films. Work in connection with schools and educational bodies continues; seven lectures have been delivered to institutes and societies.

The report expressed regret at the "arbitrary procedure followed by the Licensing Magistrates in refusing to permit the showing of *Poils de Carotte* at the Prince of Wales Theatre." At the meeting Mr. W. Lyon Blease, for the Executive Committee said that it was felt that there should be some procedure whereby licensing magistrates might be advised before making decisions which prevented adults from enjoying works of artistic importance.

TYNESIDE FILM SOCIETY, c/o Literary and Philosophical Society, Newcastle upon Tyne, 1.

The Tyneside Film Society has now completed its first season and there is every evidence that its activities have aroused wide interest. Recent events on its programme include a third private exhibition of films, at which *Warning Shadows*, *A Nous la Liberté* and a Fischinger musical abstract, *The Magician's Apprentice* were shown; a special morning show for children, arranged in conjunction with the Newcastle Branch of the Modern Languages Association; lectures on "Film production" and "Film Appreciation" by Mr. A. G. Greaves (chairman of the Montagu Amateur Pictures) and Mr. Ernest Dyer (film critic of the *Newcastle Evening Chronicle* and chairman of the Society) respectively; and an exhibition of amateur 16mm. films, arranged in conjunction with the Youth Hostels Association. The final event of the season, which was an excursion with Montagu Amateur Pictures to see



"Lax of Poplar" entertains two visitors: a scene from *MASTERSHIP*, produced by the Religious Film Society

them shoot one of the scenes in their new picture *Sanctuary*, gave members the opportunity of getting an insight into the practical side of film production.

MANCHESTER AND SALFORD WORKERS' FILM SOCIETY, 86, Hulton Street, Salford, 5.

The Society concluded its 1933-4 season with a performance of *Potemkin*. During the close season it is trying to establish a studio and experimental room for sub-standard work and to give members an opportunity of learning the technical side of film production. It also hopes to show one-hour programmes of shorts. The next session begins in September. Eight programmes will be given at the Rivoli Cinema, Rusholme, Manchester, and the first will probably include *Thunder Over Mexico*.

Admission to the Society's performances is confined to members and the subscription is 10/- per annum.

BRADFORD FILM INSTITUTE SOCIETY, Y.M.C.A., Bradford.

The Bradford Film Institute Society presented a programme of vocational films in connection with a lecture given at the Y.M.C.A. headquarters by the Director of the Juvenile Labour Bureau. The films shown were the Willesden Employment Bureau film *Success* and *The Climber* (Health and Cleanliness Council). The cycling, hiking and rambling clubs of the district were invited to see the Youth Hostel Film *Youth Hails Adventure*, which was heartily applauded by a large audience. Bradford's Cine Society are now making a film of the city and its history. On July 13th the Film Institute has arranged a demonstration of Gaumont British Instructional films, to which teachers and other educational authorities have been invited.

MAIDSTONE FILM SOCIETY, Fowden Hall, London Road, Maidstone.

Mr. E. Salter Davies, C.B.E., M.A., Director of Education for Kent, was elected president of the Maidstone Film Society for the coming session at the Society's general meeting. Mr. D. Benjamin, director of Maidstone Cinemas Ltd., has again promised generous help.

FILM SOCIETY OF GLASGOW, 127, St. Vincent Street, Glasgow, C.2.

The Society is considering the exhibition of *L'Ordonnance*, *La Maternelle*, *Charlemagne* and a revival of *Joyless Street* for their next season, which starts in October.

enthusiastically received and enquiries received from all over the world have resulted in bookings as far ahead as February, 1935. Encouraged by this success and helped by the generous enterprise of Mr. J. Arthur Rank, the Society is planning to undertake new productions in the near future. (A review of *Mastership* appears on page 73).

SCOTTISH EDUCATIONAL CINEMA SOCIETY, 129, Bath Street, Glasgow.

Interest in the Scottish Educational Cinema Society has grown rapidly in Scotland during the last three months. In Lanarkshire alone, where a Branch was formed at the beginning of March, there are already about five hundred members; and practical steps are being taken there to spread the movement even into the smaller villages.

Foremost among the recent activities of the Society stands the exhibition of Screen Aids to Education, held in Glasgow on 20th and 21st May. The opening ceremony was performed by Sir Charles Cleland, K.B.E., honorary president of the Society. On both days the exhibition was extremely well attended by visitors not only from the West of Scotland but from Islay, Invernesshire and among other places, from various parts of northern England. The stall-holders were more than satisfied. Some of them had come from London specially for the exhibition to hear the views of educationists on the types of equipment and films desirable and they were not disappointed. At the stall of the British Film Institute there was a constant stream of visitors.

During the last quarter the Society also organised a matinee for school children. The films were drawn entirely from the productions of the G.P.O. Film Unit and John Grierson himself addressed the children. In his speech he gave a striking description of the kind of films he makes and why and how he makes them. Both *Drifters* and *Industrial Britain* were shown at this matinee, which was attended by about three thousand children.

Recently a movement has been afoot in Scotland to organise the various film activities, trade, cultural and educational on the lines of the British Film Institute, and a report of the Glasgow meeting in June, at which it was decided to form a Scottish section of the Institute, is reported elsewhere in this issue. Like other film bodies in Scotland, the Scottish Educational Cinema Society is lending its wholehearted support to the movement.

Enquiries regarding the Society should be addressed to the Hon. Secretary and should be accompanied by a stamped addressed envelope.

TECHNICAL AND TRADE REVIEWS

FILM INSTITUTE TECHNICAL REPORTS

RECOMMENDATIONS FROM THE BRITISH KINEMATOGRAPH SOCIETY

I. SUB-STANDARD SOUND FILM

THE British Film Institute from the time of its establishment has been called upon to advise potential users of non-theatrical films on the type of apparatus they should install. At present, however, there is upon the market a large variety of sub-standard machines, and the purchaser is at a loss when making a selection, as the method of reproducing the sound varies, with the consequence that only such films as are made for a particular machine are available. The difficulty has not been merely one of choice between 8 mm., 9.5 mm., 16 mm. and 17.5 mm., sizes; if the 16 mm. size were selected further questions were involved such as sound on disc or sound on film, the position and dimension of the sound tracks on the film, *i.e.*, the position and dimensions of the perforations. Thus 16 mm. size films (sound) were not inter-available between 16 mm. size machines. The Institute realised that until it solved these problems, which have militated against the adequate supply of educational films, progress in the use of the cinematograph as an aid to learning would be slow.

The British Film Institute met the situation by inviting the British Kinematograph Society (which is concerned with all technical aspects of the industry) to examine the question of the sub-standard film from all aspects with a view to recommending a definite standard. Evidence was taken and numerous meetings held, including several with representatives of British manufacturing firms. As the result of this enquiry the Governors of the British Film Institute received from the Executive of the British Kinematograph Society a review of the situation in Great Britain regarding sub-standard film and apparatus, together with a recommendation that the 16 mm. standard with perforations on the right hand (when looking at the emulsion side) should be adopted for "sound on film" sub-standard stock and apparatus in this country. The British Film Institute unanimously agreed to endorse this recommendation, and to take the necessary steps to recommend the standard to all organisations, societies, schools, etc., anticipating the use of the film in their work, and to secure its adoption in Great Britain.

2. PERMANENT PRESERVATION OF FILMS

AT the request of the British Film Institute an enquiry was undertaken by the British Kinematograph Society into the conditions necessary for the permanent preservation of films for historical purposes. A special committee was appointed to advise on the subject consisting of the following: Mr. S. Rowson, President of the British Kinematograph

Society (chairman), Dr. G. R. Davies (appointed by the Department of Scientific and Industrial Research), Mr. J. A. Hall (appointed by the National Physical Laboratory), Mr. Cecil M. Hepworth, Mr. F. R. Renwick (Selo), Captain J. W. Smith, and Mr. I. R. Webb and Mr. I. D. Wratten (Kodak) and the following is a summary of their report:

- (1) Motion picture films as they are known to the trade at present should be used for preservation rather than any attempt made to employ a metallic base or other unusual means to ensure complete permanence.

It would probably be possible to devise a process for preserving the pictures not necessarily in the form in which they appear in the modern film, but such a process might involve complicated technical operations, new types of machines and considerable expense before the pictures could be restored to the form in which they would be required for projection purposes. This might be the case, for example, if it were thought well to preserve film by means of prints on a metal support, or by considerable reduction of dimensions. These theoretical possibilities are to be avoided in favour of a system which will preserve the pictures at their present dimensions on a transparent film support.

- (2) Acetate film is recommended rather than nitrate film, although the latter has a longer history, because acetate film is known to be more stable and is not highly inflammable.

For the purposes of preservation there are two parts to a film, the *photographic image*, consisting of finely divided metallic silver in a thin film of gelatine and the transparent *flexible support* upon which the gelatine is coated. The latter is of two kinds, known commercially as celluloid (cellulose nitrate) and safety film (cellulose acetate).

The photographic image is regarded as practically permanent in itself provided that certain definite precautions (see 3 below) are taken in its preparation and that it is suitably regarded during its preservation.

It is the cellulose base upon which the gelatine is coated which is regarded as being much more liable to deterioration than the photographic image; and celluloid, because of the chemical reactions which take place between the vapours it gives off and the film itself is more liable to deterioration than safety film. (As it already has been explained in SIGHT AND SOUND the title "safety film" refers to the *relatively* non-inflammable nature of cellulose acetate).

From the point of view of the inquiry celluloid has the advantage in that it is in common use for commercial films at the present time, whereas the use of safety film is almost entirely confined to the smaller or sub-standard films which are at present principally used by amateurs and for non-theatrical purposes. Celluloid also has the advantage of having been in use for a very much longer period and the history of its behaviour with the lapse of time is consequently better known. On the other hand, chemists are agreed that safety film is in itself a more stable material in the sense that it is less liable to spontaneous disintegration. It is also believed to be less likely to have a harmful effect upon the photographic image by the generation of deleterious gases and because it is inflammable only to a slight degree,

it needs no special precautions against fire, whereas celluloid, as is well known, is very highly inflammable. Indeed, it has one of the characteristics of an explosive in that its combustion is exothermic and produces oxidising agents. A celluloid fire, therefore, cannot be smothered. Celluloid must be regarded as a danger to everything in its neighbourhood as well as to itself and the fire precautions which are insisted upon by all authorities concerned when celluloid is stored are onerous and expensive.

For these reasons it is very strongly urged that films intended for preservation for a long period should be produced upon safety film, which for this purpose should not contain in admixture with it more than a trifling proportion of cellulose nitrate or its equivalent, it being accepted that this proportion should never be more than 5 per cent.

- (3) Films intended for storage should, as a matter of routine, be subjected to complete refixation and thorough washing in many changes of water with a final rinse in distilled water.
- (4) Films should be stored in non-ferrous metal containers or in bakelite or fibre boxes to hold approximately 1,000 feet of a core of not less than 2in. diameter.
- (5) The air in storage vaults or rooms should be conditioned so as to maintain a temperature of 60 degrees F; plus or minus 5 degrees at a relative humidity of 50 per cent.
- (6) In the case of cellulose nitrate films a lower temperature is desirable, say, not more than 40 degrees F and not less than 33 degrees F; and provision must be made in that case for the very gradual warming up of the film in a dry atmosphere so as to avoid condensation when it is taken out into a normal room for inspection.

It may not always be practicable to insist upon films being made on an acetate base specially for preservation, and it may therefore be necessary to take charge of existing celluloid films for long periods. In this case the existing regulations as laid down by the Home Office must of necessity be followed in order to minimise the risk from fire and it is not felt that any further precautions to ensure longevity than those already outlined need be laid down. It is, however, highly desirable that the temperature in the store shall be kept as low as possible above actual freezing point.

- (7) Films should be inspected at five yearly intervals and upon the occurrence of signs of deterioration, the films should be copied by photography and the copy stored in place of the original.

It cannot, with confidence, be predicted how long the films so prepared and stored would really last before they began to deteriorate, either through failure of the photographic image or the disintegration of the transparent support, but it may be assumed that they would last for 50 years and it is quite possible they would last a good deal longer. The end of the film, however, as an entity is not necessarily the end of its subject matter, for it can be copied (reproduced by photography) and so, in a sense, start its career all over again.

It is recommended, therefore, that any films stored in accordance with the foregoing should be taken out and carefully examined at intervals for signs of deterioration. If and when these begin to appear the films should be reproduced by photography—that is to say, if the original is a positive print a negative should be made from it and this negative stored in the place of the primary positive. If the primary positive is so far shrunken as to be difficult to give a satisfactory print by contact, the negative print should be made by projection. This new negative should

last as long as the original positive, say, another fifty years, and at the end of that time a positive print may be made from it and this process of duplication may be repeated two or three or four times. It will be understood, however, that at each duplication something of the quality of the original is necessarily lost, even if the utmost care be used and therefore there is a definite limit to the number of times which the film can be duplicated.

On the other hand, it is extremely probable that both photographic processes and the manufacture of transparent base will be vastly improved as time goes on and that with this improvement the life of every film will be correspondingly increased so that it may be assumed that, although the first duplication may become necessary after a lapse of 50 years or less, it may well be that the next period will not be limited to 50 years.

It is important that films deposited for storage should never be used for projection. They should be used only for providing prints for this purpose.

- (8) With a view to the probable necessity of reproduction, the print for storage purposes should be one having rather less contrast and rather higher density than is usual in films for ordinary projection and the gelatine should not be over-hardened.

A duplicating positive or duplicating negative stock should be used according to whether a positive or negative print is being made. (Note: At the present time manufacturers are not producing either duplicating positive or duplicating negative stock on a safety base).

Very high or very low densities must be avoided in order to secure as nearly linear reproduction as possible.

THE PHOTOGRAPHY OF SOUND

At the Royal Society of Arts a lecture was given recently by Dr. C. E. Mees, Director of Research for the Eastman Kodak Company, of Rochester, U.S.A., on some of the technical methods of sound recording which have been developed in the United States. The major portion of the lecture was devoted to an explanation of the two distinct systems of sound recording in use at the present time. With the aid of slides and films Dr. Mees demonstrated the appearance of a film sound track when the sound had been recorded (a) by varying the density of the photographic deposit and (b) by a variation in the area occupied by the photographic deposit. He went on to illustrate the three attributes of sound—loudness, frequency or pitch and wave form quality or timbre. Films were again used as a means of showing to what extent the range of intensity is limited by ground noise. The granular structure of the silver deposit is responsible for this ground noise, and it is therefore impossible to eliminate it entirely even on a perfectly clean film. Special experimental apparatus has now been designed for analysing the wave form which should greatly assist in perfecting the quality of reproduction.

Mr. H. Bruce Woolfe, director of Gaumont-British Instructional Ltd., has been elected to the permanent Technical and Consultative Committee of the International Educational Cinematographic Institute, which has its headquarters in Rome.

The technical committee consists of representatives from six nations, and Mr. Bruce Woolfe will represent Great Britain.

THE FILM IN THE MAKING—VI.

FILTERS

By George W. Pocknall

THE correct and intelligent use of filters in cine-photography calls for a certain knowledge of the theoretical principles of colour propagation; he should be conversant with such terms as transmission, absorption, reflection, wave-length. It is not suggested he should have at his finger-ends all the theories of the science of colour and light, which is a lifetime's study; but certain fundamental principles he should know. It is not sufficient merely to be aware that filters are used to render clouds. I myself have only touched the fringe of what is perhaps the most fascinating of the sciences that play so large a part in cine-photography, but even with my very limited amount of learning I have no hesitation in saying that the lack of knowledge which many of our cameramen and technicians show regarding their very life's blood—light and colour—is appalling. There will, I know, be many who will say that this is all bunkum. May I ask them for an answer to the following samples of problems arising out of a display of "technical knowledge":

1. Why a cameraman should and did use a red filter and red sensitive stock when photographing the St. George's Cross flag, and then wonder why it had to be re-taken? (The St. George's Cross flag being a red cross on a plain white ground).

2. Why a technician trying to obtain a reflection from water effect from a large flat tank with tarpaulin lining, should nobly endeavour to alter the position of his reflected image by "tipping the tank"?

3. Why a director who asked his cameraman to use a filter so as to obtain a pleasing cloud effect should be told that the use of a filter was unnecessary with the modern panchromatic stock as it was sensitive to all colours?

4. Why a cameraman asked to obtain dead black skies during the day, should choose to use super-sensitive pan stock, countless filters and then, not getting the effect required, should frantically send to Germany for hyper-sensitised stock?

These examples are perfectly genuine and the concerned were technicians of repute—one in fact had come from Germany under a labour permit, as an "ace" cameraman and technician.

I am of the opinion that the phenomena of colour can only be understood when the student has accepted once and for all the idea that there is no such thing as colour and that it does not exist. He must accept colour as a visual phenomenon and to look upon the word colour as only a convenient means of



THE FILM IN THE MAKING. Miss Mary Field and Mr. Pocknall hold a consultation on lighting conditions (G.B.I.)

describing this phenomenon, precisely as the word money is used to describe the token of exchange, though actual money does not exist. If colour does exist as an objective attribute, why is it that an object that we would unhesitatingly describe as being yellow in colour can be made to look just as unmistakably orange or even black (of no colour) without any change taking place in the matter, either physically or chemically?

It would be safe to say that the modern panchromatic emulsions which are comparatively sensitive to the entire visual spectrum, do not call for the use of filters to the same extent as the earlier orthochromatic or ordinary emulsions. But one must be very careful to qualify this statement by saying that it only holds good when endeavouring to obtain a comparatively correct colour rendering from a subject which has a reasonably gentle colour gradation if the subject has violent colour contrasts, i.e., the opposite ends of the spectrum predominating, a correcting filter must of necessity be used to obtain a photographic contrast approximating to the visual contrast. The most important use of filters to-day is not essentially for obtaining comparative correct colour rendering, but rather for producing contrast effects, cloud effects, and for obtaining exposure control and so on. In the days of the ordinary emulsion a subject with blue and red as the predominating colours would produce plenty of contrast without the use of a filter, but it was essential to use a filter if one wanted to kill the contrast. With the present-day fast panchromatic emulsion



Dark sky effect in a Polytechnic student's film : IN SALZ-KAMMERGUT, by D. Cartwright, shown at the exhibition of senior students' work at the London Polytechnic

the exact opposite in treatment is called for ; contrast can only be obtained by the use of a filter.

The use of filters with panchromatic emulsions demands that the nature of the light source being used should be studied and filters chosen accordingly ; it would, for instance, be quite wrong to use, say a K2 with incandescent lighting, which is itself approximately equivalent to the correction given by the K2 filter ; with daylight it is necessary, with most stocks, to use a green filter, again assuming that one is aiming for comparative correct colour rendering. Actually in cine-photography one seldom aims at this result ; in landscape work, for instance, it is generally necessary to over-correct in the yellows to obtain effective cloud gradation unless one uses graduated filters ; but unfortunately a comprehensive supply of these filters is not easily obtainable.

It is essential not only to study each individual shot but also to know what effect is desired. Only by training himself to colour-read his subject can a beginner raise himself out of the class of " technicians " who use a " bit of coloured glass " in front of their lens because it is the correct thing to do and because real cameramen do it.

The following description of the filter treatment of two consecutive sequences in an actual film may perhaps be useful. The first sequence was a snow-covered English countryside. The second sequence the same scene under spring conditions.

Sequence one presented what is perhaps one of the most difficult conditions for the cameraman, a snow scene in sunshine, and the difficulties were increased by the definite instructions of the director that the scene should *look* cold. Snow, with sunshine, neither feels nor looks cold, owing to the strong reflection from the snow. Coldness is best expressed by greys. The sky was bluish with beautiful clouds and the choice of filters could naturally only rest between yellow, orange or red. The yellow (Wratten G) was chosen for the following reasons :

It rendered the sky as a suitable grey with pleasing

cloud delineation, but, what was more important, it was what one might describe as gentle with the snow shadows ; snow shadows have, by visual contrast, a blueness which if over-corrected, tends to black.

The use of an orange or red filter would have given much more startling cloud results, but by making the snow shadows blacker would have increased the general contrast, thereby adding to the brilliance of the scene, an effect not desired. The result was certainly cold and grey on the screen.

The second sequence, to follow immediately on the first, was to illustrate the sunlit spring aspect of the same scene. Once again the sky was in such a condition that the orange or red filter would have given beautiful cloud rendering, but what would they have done to the lovely brilliant greens of spring ? Green and red are colour sensations which are complementary to each other, and the red filter would have therefore been fatal ; extreme absorption in the green would have resulted in the delicate young foliage being rendered as comparatively black. In this case the filter chosen was the Wratten K3, which gave pleasing cloud gradation without over-correcting and blackening the greens. In both these cases the exposure was generous, as it always should be for normal work. It might here be mentioned that although the K3 filter is now classed by the stock makers as obsolete, or rather superfluous, it is a very useful filter if one knows how to use it. The makers merely class it as superfluous from the point of view of approximate correct colour rendering owing to the correct proportionate yellow sensitivity of their stock. The intelligent use of the K3 filter is a perfect illustration of filter selection for effect results as against colour rendering.

In my opinion the red filter, which should be one of the most useful, is the most abused and unintelligently used of all the filters. One so often sees shots that are hopelessly over-corrected in the red, frequently merely for the sake of cloud rendering which would have been obtained just as well pictorially with a deep yellow (such as the Wratten G) without turning all the greens to black. I remember seeing a shot taken fairly recently by a cameraman of repute showing the Hampshire downs rolling away into the distance, in the foreground a flock of white geese and the leading lady, as a village maiden, dressed in white. The clouds were startling ; one would not really describe them as beautiful—they were too steep in gradation ; but oh ! the greens of the grasslands ! They were black, the hedges were black ; black fields with black hedges, across the foreground of which wandered ghastly balls of white, the geese, followed by a white ghost, the leading lady. A hideous effect which was all due to misuse of the red filter.

I feel, in conclusion, that all of us who are technicians and cameramen should write a paean of praise to the stock makers for giving us panchromatic film and balanced filters to use with it. We ought to repay them by not abusing their products with unintelligent filter selection and the production of results that must sometimes break their hearts.

INTERMITTENT MOVEMENT ON SUB-STANDARD PROJECTORS

By H. D. Waley

SINCE the essence of cinematography is the rapid substitution of one image for another at a fixed point, the intermittent movement of cinema apparatus which propels the film in a series of jerks may justly be considered as the machine's most vital organ.

Moreover, it has a function which is not only most essential, but also most difficult. The jerks which it imparts to the film must be very rapid, or undue time will be wasted in the picture-shift and 'flicker' will result, combined with loss of luminosity. On the other hand, the impetus gathered during these rapid jerks must be held back instantaneously at a single definite point, or the picture on the screen will be unsteady. This holding-back action is, of course, in part effected by the friction of gate pressure. Here again the incompatibility between rapid movement and repeated dead stoppages occasions difficulties of design. If the gate exercises excessive friction the film cannot be tugged through it by the intermittent movement without undue wear. If, on the other hand, it exercises too little, the film will overshoot its proper stopping-point and unsteady projection will result. The gate therefore works within narrow limits of error and requires to be kept reasonably clean.

There are three principal types of intermittent movement which have been found to function well in practice—the maltese cross, the claw and the beater.

The four-armed cross is now practically universal on 35mm. projectors. The cross is, in essence, a special type of gear-coupling by means of which a continuously rotating spindle carrying a striking-pin and a circular cam drives another spindle, carrying the cross, in a series of jerks. The cross-carrying spindle also carries a lightly-made sprocket-wheel which is in constant mesh with the film. The cross-carrying spindle moves while the striking-pin traverses the slots of the cross and stops while the rim of the circular cam locks the concave edges of the cross. Such a gear gathers speed rapidly towards the middle of its stroke and thereafter loses it rapidly. This characteristic assists both the preservation of the film and the steadiness of the picture, as the slow start lessens the strain put upon it each time the drag begins and the slow finish lessens the tendency of the film to overshoot at the end. In spite of these advantages the cross movement has not been found to adapt itself readily to sub-standard practice.

For reasons of a rather technical nature the most practical form of maltese cross for cinematographic purposes is the traditional heraldic one with four arms. This type of cross implies the use of a four-picture intermittent sprocket wheel. Such a wheel will, where 35mm. film is concerned, possess

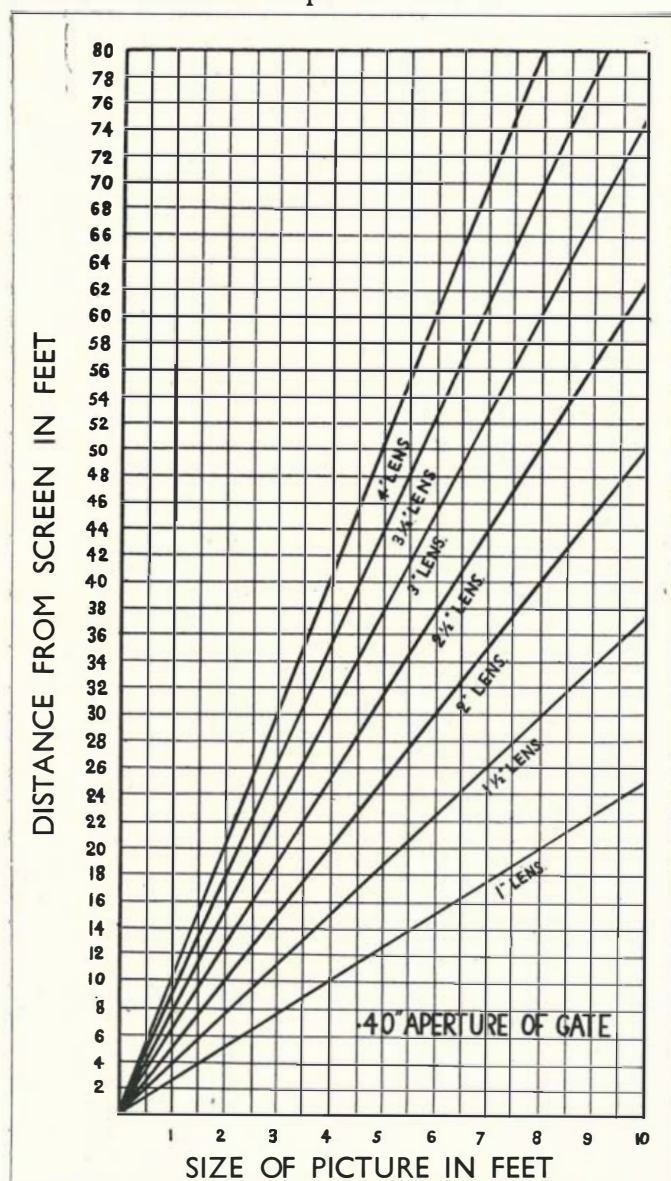
sixteen teeth, placed reasonably close together round a reasonably large diameter. But, where 16mm. film is concerned, there would be only four teeth, spaced far apart on a much smaller diameter, round at least one third of which the film would have to be wrapped in an uncomfortably sharp curve in order to engage even two teeth at once. This difficulty has been met in one unconventional design—the Synchrophone—by employing an eight-armed cross. Such a cross will, unless special steps are taken, move too slowly in relation to the driving spindle for projection purposes and the designers of this instrument have accordingly doubled the speed of their driving spindle, while arranging that its pin shall strike the cross on every alternate rotation only.

By this means a relationship between the stationary period and shift period of 6:1 has been established. The Gaumont British 16mm. projector employs a six-armed cross.

Claw movements will need no general description since all users of sub-standard apparatus are familiar with one or other of their varieties. In some, such as the Pathe claw mechanism, a combination of cams and springs presses the claws forward, drives them down, retracts them and forces them, still retracted, upwards. This is one of the earliest types of claw-design but continues to justify itself by its reliable action. In the cheaper Pathe sub-standard mechanisms it is so constructed as to give a 3:1 relationship between the stationary and shift periods, but the 'Lux' mechanism gives a 5:1 relationship. In the new Pathe 17.5mm. design the claw pushes the film from above instead of pulling it from below and this modification enables the moving parts to function in an oilbath.

In numerous other types, among which we may mention the Kodak, Ensign, Bell-Howell and Bolex mechanisms, ingenious combinations of rotating gear-wheels and oscillating arms propel the claws through appropriate courses. In Kodascope C. the claw describes a figure of 8 laid on its side and partially flattened. The claw engages the film during the flattest part of its trajectory, which corresponds to the slight curve of the gate in this model. The stationary to shift period relationship is 5:1. In Kodascope K the gate is rectilinear and the mechanism propels the claw in distinct phases of engagement with the perforations, straight downward pull and disengagement. In this model the improved ratio of 5.75:1 is achieved. All claw movements lend themselves to lightness of construction and most permit of reverse action and they are therefore particularly appropriate to sub-standard projectors, which all aim at portability, while reverse-action is, in the opinion of some, desirable for teaching projectors.

It has to be admitted, however, that claw movements, though reaching a perfectly practical standard regarding the life of the film do tend to damage the perforations earlier than other types of movement. It is therefore of interest to note that a move has been made in one recent 16mm. projector—the Siemens—towards reviving the old 'beater' movement in an improved form. The beater movement consists of a member striking down on the film-loop between the bottom of the gate and the lower film-sprocket. In the old 35mm. beater designs, which were at one time very popular, this member was a roller-carrying bar describing a circular path. This circular path was not the ideal one for the purpose aimed at and threw considerable stress on the film. In the Siemens intermittent movement a rounded fibre block housing a claw is so actuated by a rocking mechanism that it gives the film-loop a well-directed downward push. The efficiency of this design may be judged from the fact that the Siemens standard projector achieves a ratio of 6.4:1 and the Siemens 'Superlux' 9.8:1.



Graph showing the relation between size of picture and distance from screen with lenses of different focal lengths (By courtesy of Messrs. J. H. Dallmeyer Ltd.)

SUB-STANDARD SOUND FILM

A SUMMARY OF SYSTEMS IN USE

SUB-STANDARD sound-film is the logical sequel of sub-standard silent film and it may therefore be interesting to examine the nature of the difficulties which arise when we seek to produce a sound-track on film less than 35mm. wide.

To begin with it must be borne in mind that if accurate sound-recording regardless of commercial conditions was the principal aim of cinematography the standard 35mm. film would be made wider and would be propelled through the projector at a greater speed. The present dimensions of the film and its speed of travel represent a compromise between the theoretically desirable and the commercially practicable which has been forced upon the cinema industry by the fact that sound arrived as an afterthought, at a date when the industry found itself already committed to the 35mm. standard by the extent of its existing investment in apparatus designed for use with film of that width.

Accordingly present practice represents an attempt to crowd a sound-track on to the picture-strip with as little disturbance as possible of existing apparatus.

The result has, of course, been a picture too square in its proportions for the majority of subjects and a sound-track too slow in its travel to record the full range of wave-frequencies audible to the average ear. The shrillest audible sounds have a frequency as high as fifteen thousand a second. Commercial cinematography does not at present purport to deal with frequencies much higher than five thousand. Modern improved systems aim at extending this limit as far as eight or even ten thousand. In any event even the standard sound-film in its present form is so constituted that there is no immediate prospect of its rendering accurately the full scale of audible sound, which, of course, is necessary in order that any given sound may possess its exact natural quality.

To state the problem in a slightly different way, when it comes to dealing with high frequencies the sound engineer has to try to squeeze into the eighteen inches of film which represent one second of time more wave-crests and wave-troughs than there is really room for. At a certain point the pattern of his sound-track begins to require accuracy of such microscopic minuteness that the tone rendering of its detail becomes vitiated by material facts of comparative coarseness. Among these one must number the width of the scanning-slits used in reproducing and recording, the tendency of photographic emulsions to spread the image in printing and developing and the tendency of film to travel in jerks owing to the action of sprocket-teeth on perforations.

THE BRITISH FILM INSTITUTE

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The British Film Institute exists "to encourage the use and development of the cinematograph as a means of entertainment and instruction." Its objects are:—

1. To act as a clearing house for information on all matters affecting films at home and abroad, particularly as regards education and general culture.
2. To influence public opinion to appreciate the value of films as entertainment and instruction.
3. To advise educational institutions and other organisations and persons on films and apparatus.
4. To link up the film trade and the cultural and educational interests of the country.
5. To encourage research into the various uses of the film.
6. To establish a national repository of films of permanent value.
7. To provide a descriptive and critical catalogue of films of educational and cultural value.
8. To advise Government Departments concerned with films.
9. To certify films as educational, cultural or scientific.
10. To undertake similar duties in relation to the Empire.

WHAT IT NEEDS

In pursuance of this programme the British Film Institute desires to secure the support of all bodies and individuals that have at heart the encouragement of the best type of film and the full development of the constructive uses of the cinema. Alike in the public cinema and in the schoolroom and lecture room, the film has a growing influence upon thought and action. The purpose of the British Film Institute is to encourage the best features of this influence and to draw together all those who are concerned in its exercise. A strong membership of the Institute will be a guarantee that this work is being worthily and fruitfully performed. You are invited to lend it your support either by subscribing as an individual or by inducing corporate organizations to which you belong to apply for membership.

It is proposed to form Branches of the Institute throughout the country. Information as to the necessary procedure to establish these will be forwarded on request.

An Interim Report on the first six months work is now ready.

HOW TO OBTAIN MEMBERSHIP

The Institute being a Company limited by guarantee it is necessary for intending members to fill up the form of application which will be found overleaf and forward it together with a subscription of £1-1/- for the year ending June 30th, 1935. A copy of the Memorandum and Articles of Association will be forwarded for perusal if desired. Corporate Bodies can become members of the Institute by paying an annual subscription of not less than £5 5s. Such subscribers would entitle the affiliated organization to commensurate privilege of membership.

Members will be entitled to receive publications issued by the Institute, including (1) the official organ, SIGHT AND SOUND; (2) a monthly review of new films suitable for educational or instructional purposes and entertainment films of unusual merit, and (3) an annual report on the year's work.

Copies of SIGHT AND SOUND are available to non-members at the price of 6d. per copy (7½d. including postage), and a separate subscription form will be found on the next page.

THE BRITISH FILM INSTITUTE

APPLICATION FOR MEMBERSHIP

To the Governors

I hereby make application to be admitted to membership of the British Film Institute and agree, if elected, to observe the provisions of the Memorandum and Articles of Association and the Rules and Regulations of the Institute for the time being in force.

I enclose herewith the sum of £1 1s. 0d. (or 10/6, if after December 31st) and will pay annually on July 1st the yearly subscription of £1 1s. 0d.

I further undertake, if elected, to contribute to the assets of the Institute in the event of its being wound up while I am a Member or within one year after I cease to be a Member, for payment of the debts and liabilities of the Institute contracted before I cease to be a Member, and of the costs, charges and expenses of winding up and for the adjustment of the rights of the contributors among themselves such amount as may be required, not exceeding one pound.

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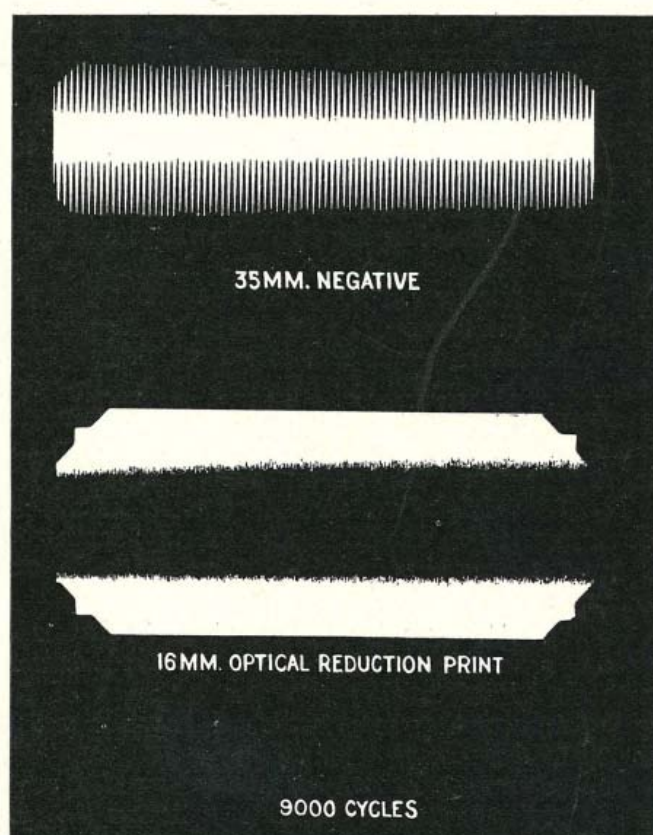
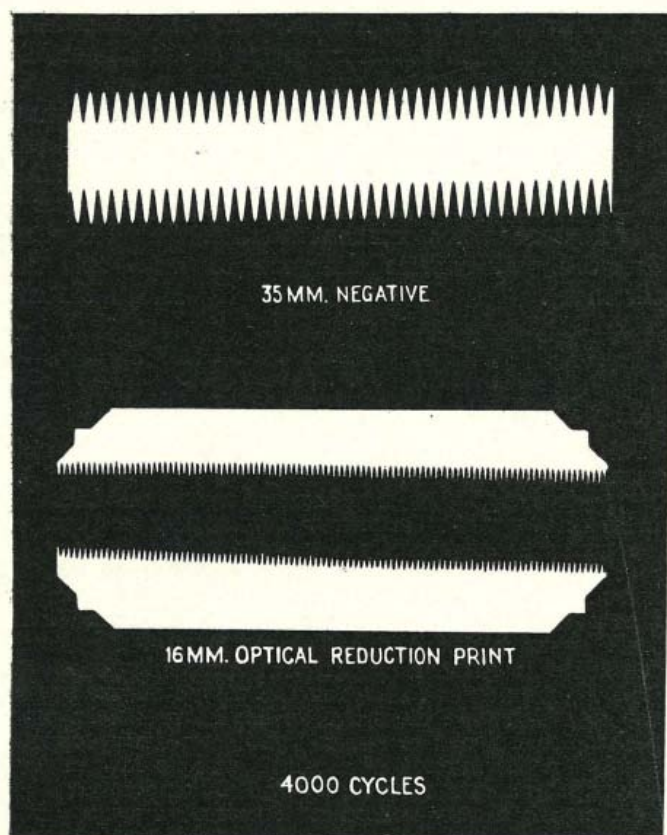
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High frequency sounds lose almost all their volume when reproduced on 16 mm. film (note rough and blurred track on right)

The actual details of the sound track's breakdown at high frequencies can be clearly studied in the accompanying illustrations, reproduced by the courtesy of Mr. J. O. Baker and the journal of the Society of Motion Picture Engineers. They represent standard sound-tracks and 16 mm. sound-tracks greatly magnified. It will be noted that at a frequency of four thousand the troughs and crests of the waves are fairly accurately outlined on the 16mm. sound-track. But at nine thousand the 16mm. sound-track fails completely to represent the fine-toothed comb conformation of the standard sound-track. The interstices of the teeth have got filled in and the ends chipped and broken. In fact, the appearance of the track may remind the imaginative of the broken toilet-combs seen on deserted bathing beaches at the end of the winter. This appearance indicates, to return to the practical aspect of the matter, that frequencies as high as nine thousand lose almost all their volume when rendered on 16mm. film. Moreover, as has been already explained, precisely the same thing happens to frequencies over eight or nine thousand when recorded on 35mm. film by the best systems now available.

The sound engineer has, of course, another limiting factor to contend with—the inertia of his loud-speaker. Sound-tracks carrying frequencies far above those which the speaker could handle would clearly be a useless refinement. But undoubtedly he would even now like to spread the details of his second's sound-pattern over a greater length than eighteen inches. That is to say he would like a faster-travelling film. In fact he nearly agitated successfully for this some years ago when wide film

seemed for a short time imminent as the next technical development. The average sound-engineer is now, I suppose, reconciled to the 35mm. gauge. But it has to be remembered that when he is asked to turn his attention to the 16mm. gauge all his problems are acutely aggravated. Where he previously found eighteen inches barely adequate, he is now asked to content himself with seven and a half.

Accordingly all blurring of detail is more fatal than ever because the accuracy of pattern required from his sound-track has become proportionately more microscopic. Moreover the inaccuracies introduced by jerky movement of the film through faulty propulsion are increased in the case of sub-standard film by the wider spacing of the sprocket holes.

It is therefore a considerable triumph for the technicians to have achieved the results which they have achieved with sub-standard sound-on-film. From the purely technical point of view their task would undoubtedly be simplified by the adoption of the proposal to print the pictures lengthwise on the film, which would speed the rate of film travel up to just over 11 ins. a second in lieu of $7\frac{1}{2}$ ins.

At present those who are engaged in the reduction of sound-film to sub-standard size find themselves divided into two camps, one favouring re-recording and the other optical reduction. The re-recording process consists of running a 35mm. positive film through a sound-head, picking up the sound on a P.E. cell and re-recording it on the 16mm. film to produce a 16mm. negative. This 16mm. negative is then used to produce the 16mm. positive by contact printing.

The optical reduction process consists in pro-

jecting a reduced image of the sound-track of a 35mm. negative on to the 16mm. film while the two films are running through the printer.

Re-recording has the advantage that at a certain stage steps can be taken to over-emphasise the high frequencies and thus compensate to a great extent for their subsequent attenuation, two wrongs in this case approximating fairly closely to one right.

Optical printing, on the other hand, has two distinct advantages. One is the fact that no additional slit losses are introduced. The other is the reduction of irradiation losses which is due to the specular form of the printing light. In other words the printing light enters the film more nearly parallel than in the case of contact printing where diffused transmission of light is utilised.

The following views on the question have been communicated to the Film Institute by companies at present practising sound-film reduction in this country :

The B.T.H. company have decided in favour of optical reduction. They have evolved certain methods of minimising the disadvantages of the optical reduction process which I am not yet at liberty to describe in detail.

The Gaumont British Company, on the other hand, profess themselves firm believers in re-recording. They consider that with a slit of very small dimension (.0004 in.) such as they employ slit losses can be reduced to a negligible quantity.

The R.A.C. are at the present time practising re-recording, but feel that the balance of conditions might at any moment tip the scale over in favour of optical reduction. They admit that they are to some extent drawn to re-recording by the fact that it takes them along a path with which they are already familiar.

The Pathe Company definitely favour optical reduction.

The kind co-operation of Messrs. Lucas and Mason, of the B.T.H. Co., Dr. Kolb, of the Gaumont British Co., Mr. Underhill, of R.A.C., and

Mr. Cabirol, of the Pathe Co., who have been kind enough to furnish information for use in this article is gratefully acknowledged.

While the question of direct recording on 16mm. lies a little outside the scope of this article, the possibilities opened up by simultaneous sound-recording and photography are so important that I feel reluctant to close without mention of the Marshall 16mm. sound camera designed to fulfil this requirement.

H. D. WALEY.

NEW APPARATUS VIEWED

PHILIPS CINE-SONOR PORTABLE ; price £350

This set is an interesting addition to the 35mm. portable sets now on the market.

It is priced at £350, with speaker and screen, and embodies a number of useful refinements. Automatic speed control is incorporated and a variety of cut-outs reduce the fire risks to a minimum. A tone control is provided which enables pitch-range to be varied in accordance with the requirements of the sound-track or the shortcomings of acoustic conditions. Threading-up is simple and the correctness of the electric connections is ensured by non-interchangeable plugs.

The lighting system makes use of a type of incandescent lamp to which too little attention has hitherto been paid. Its shape is designed to reduce light-losses due to opaque deposits on the interior of the bulb and its low voltage, high amperage, current rating (15 volts 50 amperes) enables it to provide a very concentrated source of white light. In this type of lamp the usual rear mirror is replaced by a semi-spherical portion of the lamp-globe itself on to which a film of heat-resisting metal has been deposited. The condensers are aspherical. A well-lit picture twelve feet wide can be obtained at an eighty-foot throw. Having employed lamps of this type for several years on a special projector used for non-theatrical work and formed a high opinion of their efficiency I am glad to see them adopted on a standard set. Their use would, of course, involve the employment of a rather cumbersome rotary converter were the set to be run on a direct current supply.

The soundhead employs the Philips single-thread exciter lamp and dispenses with a mechanical slit. A worn-out lamp can be replaced instantaneously. The amplifier may be of either 25 or 50 watts dissipation. The speaker is of the permanent magnet moving-coil type.

On demonstration the set displayed a good picture accompanied by excellent sound.

H.D.W.

KINOX 16MM. PROJECTOR. Zeiss Ikon, Ltd., Mortimer House, Mortimer Street, London, W.1. 250 watts, £55 10s., 375 watts, £62 10s.

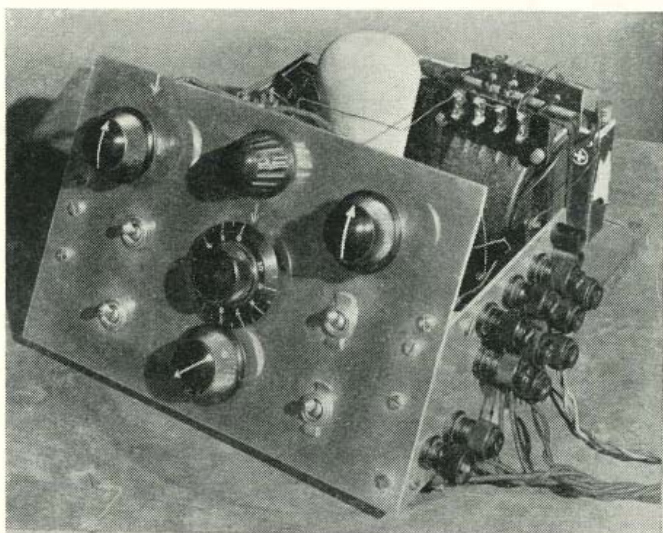
The Kinox 16mm. box projector has been recently introduced into this country by the Zeiss Ikon Company. The first point which catches the eye is its extreme portability, its external measurements being only 17½ x 13½ x 4½ inches. Moreover, it weighs only 26½ lbs.

Its enclosed form leads to quiet running, which will be appreciated where it is to be used in conjunction with a spoken commentary. Many teachers may also be glad to avail themselves of the still-picture facilities which are afforded by means of a gold-glass drop shutter.

Model B, which I was shown, is fitted with a 75 volt 375 watt lamp, fed through interchangeable resistance units. The makers claim that this model will give a well-lit picture 11 feet wide and having regard to the extreme aperture of the lens (f/1.4) this claim seems reasonable, though the demonstration picture shown to me was a good deal smaller. Provision is made for the use of either a two blade or a three blade shutter, which can be quickly interchanged. Four different focal lengths of lens, from 1½ to 3¼ inches, can be supplied.

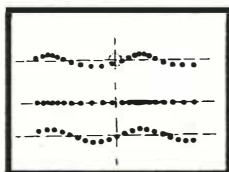
The intermittent movement is a treble claw working on one side of the film only, doubtless with a view to future adaptation for sound-on-film. The projector can be supplied with a Kodacolor unit.

H.D.W.

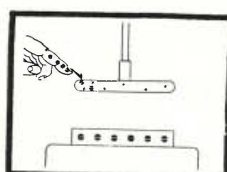


AT THE POLYTECHNIC STUDENTS' CINEMATOGRAPHIC EXHIBITION: Control panel used for the sound reproduction of records and commentary, designed by P. R. Terry.

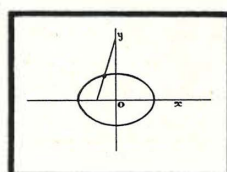
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